# Distinctiveness leads to distinction

## A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF BRAND ORIENTATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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# Abstract


*Wolfgang Nedobity: Distinctiveness leads to distinction. A conceptual model of brand orientation within the context of higher education.*

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the link between an improved brand orientation and an increased reputation in the higher education environment. An important finding to emerge in this study is that the branding challenge for higher education institutions is to enhance their distinctiveness, and to promote the notion of distinction consistently to stakeholders and other target audiences. This project has been designed to consider the extent to which the lessons learned by business can be translated into valuable lessons for higher education.

In the light of this study, it is evident that if universities are willing to become divergent and differentiated, they can accomplish what politicians expect from them: they can join the group of world-class players in higher education. Consequently, those who are able to maintain a reputation of excellence, by fulfilling their academic and social mission will inevitably attract the most talented students and faculty. Although a number of questions remain unanswered, the study refers to the state of the art as well as to further scholarly work on the matter by introducing theories, methods and cases of good practice. The conclusion summarized in chapter 7 and subsequent recommendations will be of interest to leaders in higher education institutions, who are willing to support the creation of an outstanding university brand which is based on a higher visibility of the institution's organisational performance.

# 1 Introduction

This study endeavours to make an analytical contribution to the concept of distinctiveness. Starting with a description of the key trends and typical approaches to branding as are common with commercial enterprises, it reviews the role of the hospitality industry as a possible model for universities and presents other options for higher education policy choices. These are described in relation to the three missions of universities, which are teaching, research and social involvement.

Recently an increased awareness of higher education branding was to be noticed, which is supported by the fact that it is listed among the five areas that advance branding theory and practice (Melewar and Nguyen, 2014). In analysing selected institutional efforts with regard to branding, this study cannot offer the full picture of what has been accomplished in many countries of the world. Nevertheless this study attempts to give an impetus for additional research in this field by addressing remaining gaps of evidence and open questions.

The study builds on a number of existing theories and seeks to contribute to the field of higher education in an innovative way. According to the Austrian economist Schumpeter (1934) innovations are the implementation of new combinations of existing knowledge. There were three major sources of knowledge which proved useful for a novel combination: the existing literature (chapter 2), the model of the hospitality industry (chapter 4) and the survey on the existing brand orientation (chapter 5). The juxtaposition of theory and practice based on the results of quantitative research is also a significant addition to the knowledge on the levers that determine ranking positions.

While the study makes a contribution towards a better evaluation of efforts in higher education branding, doing full justice to all existing frameworks remains a challenge as explained in the following quotation:

> "Although a significant body of research in branding has developed over time, knowledge for a number of important topics within the field remains relatively scarce. In addition compared with the beginnings of our discipline, within the last few years very few fresh frameworks have been provided that inform and guide managerial practice" (Brexendorf et al., 2015, p.688).

Thus the main objective and purpose of this study is to justify the position that branding is to take in higher education management, and to convince university leaders that the reward is worth the

investment. This study also explores and describes how branding techniques can pave the way to distinction and better results in ranking schemes.

Brands are not the purview of enterprises alone, since for instance cities, higher education institutions and outstanding scholars also utilize brands in order to become marketable. Thus, this study takes a look at higher education markets in particular. While plenty of literature is available on various marketing aspects, the works specialising on branding aspects are scarce. In approaching the complex phenomenon of higher education marketing it became obvious that branding plays a pivotal role although its institutional implementation is as a rule still in its infancy.

When market principles are introduced to universities, a specific culture of managerialism develops, which compete with academic principles that are particular to higher education and might eventually replace them by economic expediency (Rider, Hasselberg, and Waluszewski, 2013). Since many members of the marketing staff in higher education institutions are not familiar with academic issues and traditions, and have little experience from within the higher education sector, it can be anticipated that they implement their learnings from other markets and try to adapt their marketing to the specific requirement of universities. “Most university CMOs take care to keep marketing jargon to a minimum, including using the word 'marketing' sparingly, says Elizabeth Scarborough, chief executive of Simpson Scarborough, a firm specializing in higher education marketing research” (Glazer and Korn, 2012, B10). There are a number of reasons for this self-constraint, the strongest one is perhaps the superstition that market values and academic values are not compatible within the same institution. The following quotation shows that such fears are usually based upon ideology and not evidence:

> “So does the growing status of branding in universities matter? Are its values and those of higher education so at odds that the former will poison the latter? Writing in this week’s Times Higher Education, Fred Inglis, honorary professor of cultural history at the University of Warwick, argues unequivocally that they are. Branding is an “abominable monster… threatening the intellectual health and the integrity of pure enquiry”, he says, “the clinching force marketising the idea of the university” (quoted after Gill, 2013, p.5).

According to the results from this investigation university leaders should become aware of the fact that branding could serve as a bridge between those two strategic realms, in particular when considering the many analogies that exist between the brand experience and the education experience (chapter 6.7). While university leaders are much easier to convince of the benefits of branding activities, there is still a lot of resentment on the side of the students as the following statement from a document of the European Student Union (ESU) shows:

> "ESU believes that transnational education should not be used for branding higher education institutions or seeking profit from such arrangements, regardless of the frequency of the establishment of franchises, offshore campuses, twinning and joint degree programmes due to the increased demand for education. Instead, transnational education should benefit the local community and the learning environment by providing students with opportunities for quality assured education, free of charge" (ESU, 2014, p.3).

Many universities have already accepted the fact that the creation of a brand is not only an additional marketing instrument, but also an instrument for creating an organisational identity. In view of the power of not-for-profit brands, educational institutions are advised to make their brand the superordinate organising principle, guiding their leaders in their decision making. Everyone from nations to corporations to individual personalities is eager to develop themselves as a brand and seek professional support in this endeavour, thus "education – particularly university education – is another area which will look to professional branding techniques for help" (Olins, 2003, p.244).

It goes without say that branding requires additional efforts by all members of an institution. If universities are willing to make the effort of branding, they do not only reach the goal of distinctiveness more easily but also that of distinction. There are a number of examples that can function as signposts for other universities on their way to the top of league tables. For instance Oxford Brookes University, which in partnership with Bournemouth University and the University of Bradford has launched the Distinct Project (http://www.distinct.ac.uk/). A number of successful practices and experiences have resulted from this project. The Distinct case studies demonstrate how these universities and organisations from beyond the sector, have achieved distinctiveness. They explain how the following universities reached this aim: City University London, Loughborough University, Teesside University, University of Warwick and University of Leicester. Some of these success stories are referred to in the following chapters. The overall benefit can be summarized in the following way:

> "Last but not least, branding efforts may help higher education institutions to rediscover what they are, and their basic purposes. In an age with new stakeholders entering higher education, new demands being directed at universities, and an increasing amount of tasks to handle, higher education institutions may face a situation of capacity overload" (Stensaker, 2007, p.9).

# 2 Literature Review

The literature on branding theory provides a firm basis for investigating the established procedures of brand-building and the existence of a brand-orientation in fields such as higher education. A literature review can be an efficient way to give a preliminary picture of the variation and complexity of branding practice and the theories underpinning this practice. The framework has the potential to serve as a tool for those involved in the practice of educational marketing and related areas to engage in the analysis of their practice. The research design of each publication has been analysed with regard to the confidence that should be placed in its findings and the usability in higher education environments. A framework consisting of the following eleven clusters of practice emerged from this process:

1. General overviews on branding
2. Brands in marketing
3. Nation branding
4. Brand equity
5. Brand identity
6. Brand personality
7. Brand reputation
8. University-specific applications
9. Philosophical and psychological foundations of branding
10. The history of brands
11. Theories and archetypes

It is important to note that there is no intention to value one cluster over another since all of them are of relevance for constructing the conceptual framework (chapter 6). One will recognize, however, that any attempt to categorize has its limitations, and this surely is the case here. These clusters overlap to some extent or some works could fall into several categories; in these cases the most prevailing one has been chosen. They provide nevertheless useful entities for considering the various

aspects of branding practice and for considering the implications for educational practice. The evidence of some common citations to the literature in each cluster suggests that conceptually consistent core characteristics exist for each sub-field of branding.

The review has not been limited in terms of time (earliest article was 1997 and latest 2015) or source of publication, although the emphasis has been put on the inclusion of handbooks as well as leading articles from peer-reviewed journals. Inclusion and exclusion criteria have been used that seemed appropriate for clusters based on the purpose or focus of the approach, the core characteristics of the design, and the literature cited. Since there are obvious limitations with regard to the word count, this review is focused upon the timeless context which can be adopted in the following chapters of the study to the requirements of university leaders, academic teachers, researchers, and educational developers. One of the goals of this review is to juxtapose the perspectives of commerce and academia. As has been pointed out by Chapleo (2011), university branding does not fully rely on entrepreneurial branding strategies and practice. Thus the practice described in the commercial literature on branding will have to be checked for its applicability to higher education institutions and as a consequence translated as described in the chapter 3. In this way the challenge mentioned in the following quotation can be met: "Hence greater collaboration between brand practitioners and academic researchers is to be encouraged, as practice poses new and relevant challenges to academia" (Brexendorf et al., 2015, p.687).

The increasing availability of detailed customer data allowed for more precise, as well as more targeted branding efforts of enterprises. In other words, branding research has become enriched by the methods of big data and open science. One may presume that these developments add to a better comprehension of academic approaches to branding as well, since they stem from research efforts of universities. Beninger, et al. (2014, p.5) summarize the key advantage of this approach as follows: "Mining publically shared information on social media websites can be used by companies and organisations to help better understand trends and attitudes as well as to help predict future behaviours". Elósegui (2013, p.3) adds an important point, which can be seen as a further advantage over official data derived from annual reports: "with social media firmly ensconced in most firm's digital strategies, it's getting harder to hide behind fluffy metrics". Nevertheless, more empirical research of brand orientation and its drivers is imperative. In particular, the role of brands and other intellectual property of universities, notably designs and patents, in value creation at various levels remain an area for further research.

## *2.1 General Overviews on Branding*

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) give not only an academic overview of brand leadership methods, but provide deep insights into its practical applications. This book is the result of a substantial field

study of brand strategies comprising more than 300 case studies, mainly in the USA and Europe; dealing with contexts in which brands play an international role. The identification, evaluation and implementation of brand strategies form the main focus of this book. Furthermore, models and ideas were tested and analysed with the support of several consultants.

Marty Neumeier (2005) develops a number of methods which bridge the difference between brand strategy and customer experience. In this book, which is an expanded version of the first edition published in 2003, Neumeier presents a unified theory of brand building rather than the strategic or creative approaches adopted in other works. This approach does hold out the potential for a similarly unified approach to the consideration of branding in the higher education field. Whereas other books on branding take a similar approach, Neumeier shows that several types of practise can be united to create brands that clients are attracted to. There are interesting examples showing the impact that branding has on the dynamics of cooperative and of competitive ways of brand-building. What is most useful, however, for an intense study of his theory is the brand glossary at the end, comprising some 220 entries.

Wally Olins is not only the chairman of Saffron Brand Consultants, but he is known as the author of a pioneering handbook, (Olins, 2008) which offers a comprehensive coverage of corporate branding. This classic for most practitioners of the field is also widely used for the teaching of branding issues in academic courses.

Another comprehensive guidebook (Heding, T., Knudtzen, C.F. and Bjerre,M., 2008) presents an extensive theory on the nature of brands on the basis of their development during the past decades. It takes a multi-disciplinary view, backed up by some of the relevant research literature on the subject, and describes the various ways in which researchers have defined the concept of ‘brand’. Furthermore, it explains how the nature of brand and the idea of the consumer can be aligned by efficient brand management.

Debbie Millman (2011) draws her data from some fascinating interviews with 22 of the top practitioners in branding, among them Wally Olins, Phil Duncan and Seth Godin. She attempts to define the notion of the brand, a concept that dominates markets and public consciousness, and thus appears in a number of guises. Sometimes it is merely a differentiator of the products we are confronted with in the supermarket, but it can also become a coercive tool forced on us by advertisements, stimulating both our emotions and our intellect. Each chapter is built on a dialogue between the author and a different challenging pioneer of modern branding. By putting questions based on her own expertise, Millman triggers revealing answers from the various leaders in the field.

The results which attempt to bring research and experience together help practitioners understand better why enterprises sell brands and why customers buy them.

### *2.2 Brands in Marketing*

The five articles that were coded as having a marketing focus describe procedures that seek to improve consumer relationships by means of branding. An inspiring survey by Milligan and Smith (2002) demonstrates how leading companies provide worthwhile experiences for their customers and sales force alike. The premise of this book is that their success stems from their distinctive cultures which have specifically been developed to meet the requirements of clients and stakeholders. Conventional methods as well as traditional rules of branding are not considered as suitable ways for arriving at a distinct brand vision which can be translated into outstanding client services by the enterprises descibed in this article. Milligan and Smith (2002) have decided to let the voices of the institutions speak for themselves through interviews with their top executives. Their book provides valuable insights into the sophisticated principles and practices that leading enterprises share, but which are uncommon in many other organisations.

A challenging critique of how brands work on recipients of media is provided by Arvidsson (2006), an Assistant Professor at the Department of Film and Media Studies, University of Copenhagen. The objects of investigation are exclusively brands for the products and services of media which of course follow their own rules. Based on substantial empirical material, the author creates a critical theory, explaining how brands can work as an essential lever for transforming creative work into monetary value. Starting with an overview of the historical development of branding, including market research, marketing thought and advertising strategy, the book continues with an evaluation of brands that act as a key component of informational capital. Supplemented with case studies from virtual enterprises, this comprehensive book is an important contribution to the sociology of media and their marketing theories. In his preface Arvidsson (2006) mentions that the production of a common social world is the prerequisite for the extraction of brand value through autonomous processes of interaction and communication.

Two other authors (Hatch and Schultz, 2008) take an idiosyncratic look at corporate branding which exceeds beyond the marketing value of brands. Deep insights are provided by explaining how organisations are able to align their vision, image and organisational culture. They argue that the management of brands has to take place at the senior level of an organisation since it determines the success of the organization to a great extent, in particular with regard to the challenge of globalization. A number of examples are taken from successful corporations such as the LEGO Group, Intel, Nissan, and Johnson & Johnson in order to elucidate the three practical analytical models comprising the assessment of a triple indicator labelled as “vision–culture–image gaps”. This

indicator is supposed to have a major impact on branding the organisational identity. Special emphasis is given to the alignment of brands with other organisational values.

Alex Bogusky and John Winsor (2011) have worked with some of the most well-known international brands. Their creation has been based upon some top-level marketing strategies and outstanding practical examples. In their book on the latest trends in product innovation, the authors describe changes in the culture of their marketing. Hitherto enterprises were eager to create safe and reliable products and sell them via mass marketing. The new approach aims at the creation of more or less innovative products which have the marketing “built right into them”. This means that the message is not the product, but that the product is the message.

A marketing expert of the younger generation, with the name of Martin Lindstrom (2012) provides an insider analysis of efforts that are taken by enterprises to manipulate their clients' minds in a persuasive manner. In his recent book “Brandwashed” he exposes at great extent a number of psychological methods that have been developed by enterprises for a swift conquest of the marketplace. The work provides a shocking insight of how entrepreneurial leaders conspire to manipulate their client's minds, with the aim of persuading them to consume certain products or services. Lindstrom reveals eye opening details on how certain companies use their brands for brainwashing and causing addictions, e.g. regarding the usage of smartphones.

### *2.3 Nation Branding*

There are two articles in this cluster, both with the underlying rationale that certain traits of the academic community resemble that of a nation. Due to a number of strong similarities, the topic of nation branding ought to be of particular concern to higher education policy makers. The study of Helmi and Mulyanegara (2011) deals with the correlation between donation behaviour and the perceptions of a nation brand. The authors argue that the reputation of a nation’s brand will have a strong impact on the donation motives and donation behaviour in the case of a philanthropic action in favour of the respective nation. And vice versa, the reputation of non-profit organisations obviously affects the behaviour of donors and consequently the perception of the respective nation brand. Since many universities depend on donors, the role of brand perceptions on their behaviour has considerable relevance.

In the paper by Volcic and Andrejevic (2011), recent developments in the field of nation branding are described as a global phenomenon. Furthermore, the authors explore the details of this phenomenon in a case study from Slovenia. They illustrate the ways in which nation branding enjoys a certain popularity in their country and informs the economic development of this member state of

the European Union. The paper concludes with a theoretical exploration of the so-called 'commercial nationalism'.

### *2.4 Brand Equity*

The paper by Jones (2005) on the sources of brand value investigates the role of non-consumer relations in the process of creating brand value. The author develops a new model of brand equity which can serve as a tool for assessing the role of stakeholders in co-creating brand value through strategic interaction. This approach can easily be implemented on the basis of the research presented in this paper. Two years later, Yasin, Noor, and Mohamad (2007) conducted a so-called 'factor analysis' that investigated the mediating effects of the following three brand equity dimensions: brand distinctiveness, brand loyalty, and brand awareness. It becomes evident in how far the country-of-origin can directly or indirectly influence various dimensions of brand equity.

In his paper on strategies for distinctive brands, Zaichkowsky (2010) explains how brand identity together with brand equity can form a pivot for the formation of brand strategies. Consumer perceptions of brands ought to be informed by so-called distinct 'identity elements'. In this way consumers can discern competitive brands according to appropriate identity elements built into the brand. These elements work at the subconscious level and influence consumers in their buying decisions. Therefore, the investigation of psychological phenomena such as perception and social meaning is a prerequisite for brand research.

Smith (2011) investigates the concept of brand salience by looking for its phenomenological roots and by determining its intangible value. The author argues that the concepts of salience and social engagement are essential for the longevity of a brand. The author also claims that marketing efforts could be enhanced by brand narratives. This approach to building brand equity will result in brands that outlast product life cycles, provide sustainable income for organisations, and, last but not least, render meaning to clients. The practise of providing brand narratives is also familiar to members of higher education institutions as the survey (chapter 5) revealed. Brand narratives make the brand experience communicable to others and thus work as emotional multipliers.

### *2.5 Brand Identity*

The article by Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2012) explains that a client's passion for a brand is determined both by brand trust and brand identification. Consequently, brand passion can have an impact on brand commitment, which means e.g. recommending the brand to others. The authors apply a 'partial least squares structural equation' model when processing data collected from more than 1500 participants in their study which proves that brand passion develops from brand

trust as well as brand identification. The study also supports the fact that there are a number of positive economic effects mediated by brand commitment.

The paper by Kuenzel and Vaux Halliday (2010) claims that the easy identification of a brand is an important prerequisite for brand loyalty. The authors investigate the impact of such factors as the reputation and personality of a brand on client behaviour. The proposition is tested and verified on a group of Germans that have bought new vehicles. A strong correlation between brand personality and brand loyalty became obvious. Finally, a number of crucial managerial and theoretical implications are explained in the conclusions.

In 2012 Alina Wheeler revised her previous edition of the best-selling tool kit for creating and defending a convincing brand identity. It offers branding teams a universal five–phase process which seems reliable and easily applicable. In this later edition, there are a number of new case studies highlighting the latest trends in branding, including the application of social media, apps, clips and other virtual gadgets. Wheeler's proven methodology for designing and implementing effective brand identities are a great asset to practitioners who want to be up to date. This applies also to practitioners in higher education, because efforts that foster a strong brand identity of a university have to start also with establishing a stable link between organizational identity and brand image (Stensaker, 2015).

### *2.6 Brand Personality*

Aaker (1997) is a pioneer in developing a clear concept of the determinants of a brand personality. He identifies its attributes which work in five basic dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Since there is a need for metrics regarding these brand personality dimensions, a specific measurement scale has been created by the author which proves to be reliable, valid, and generalizable. In addition, the symbolic value of brands are part of the treatise. While much research in personality psychology has been carried out in order to conceptualize human personality, hardly any evidence on brand personality is provided to practitioners. Aaker attempts to fill this void by fostering the symbolic use of brands in practical applications.

Abbing (2010) chose to deal with the topic of 'brand-driven innovation'. Utilizing the synergy created by branding on the one hand, and innovation and design on the other hand is not merely a matter of public relations, but an essential factor for driving economic growth in enterprises. The author had probably entrepreneurial universities in mind as well since he is a teacher at the University of Delft (NL). By means of branding, they can market innovative services, and create value for institutions as well as clients at the same time. Abbing builds upon existing branding theories in his attempt to create a new feature, which is the four-step method (see for details:

http://www.branddriveninnovation.com/ ) that allows the application of brand-driven innovation in academic and commercial contexts. The work also addresses the pivotal role of design management in this respect.

Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) prepared two studies on brand love, as the result of an amiable brand personality. The authors are eager to emphasize the marketing potential of brand love by pointing out its prerequisites which are brand identification and a sense of community. Both of these aspects are also essential for the success of brand loyalty measures and social media advertising by word of mouth. The authors rely on data collected from two surveys. Both of them test one conceptual model each, involving six brands altogether. The findings are used to prove that both image campaigns and a strong domination of the respective market can strengthen brand loyalty and create a sense of community among clients, which leads finally to the phenomenon of so-called 'lovemarks'.

### *2.7 Brand Reputation*

The paper by Costa (2010) on brand power demonstrates how brand legends and myths can increase brand power. The author argues that a brand is more likely to become a legend when its reputation is based on service quality rather than advertising. A number of studies have found that brand legends are formed when services and operations of an enterprise contribute to a rewarding brand experience for the client. Brand myths such as Sainsbury's and Tesco, however, put greater emphasis on their advertising than the quality of their service. Thus university leaders can decide for themselves if their institutional brands are to become myths or legends. In his article on the gap between brand identity and brand reputation, De Chernatony (1999) draws the attention of brand managers to employees as brand builders, in place of other external issues such as image and reputation. In view of the significant contribution from staff they should be encouraged to align their values and create a definite brand culture. An adaptive, strategically defined culture can be supportive of a successful brand implementation. Finally the author makes it quite clear that a brand needs to be externally assessed, preferably on the basis of its reputation. It is concluded that by realizing the differences between the identity and reputation of a brand, institutions can establish mechanisms which reduce incongruence and make their brands highly accepted by consumers. The article by Doss (2011) examines the personality of a brand and its transference on the celebrity endorsing the product or service. Previous studies of brand personalities have only referred to the effects of the celebrity on the endorsed brand, but not to the reverse transference of brand attitudes. The author claims that the overall credibility and reputation of a person of high popularity is strongly influenced by the perceived standing of a brand. For instance a weak brand may also influence the attractiveness and trustworthiness of its protagonist negatively.

In their study on brand relationships Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) use data collected from 912 respondents in order to explore the reliability of a long lasting bondage what they call “brand tribalism” which is to allow predictions on the robustness of a brand relationship. The conclusions advocate brand tribalism as a suitable indicator of the strength of all types of brand relationships.

### *2.8 University-specific Applications*

The purpose of a paper by Balmer and Liao (2007) is to investigate the brand identification of students by comparing three similar higher education brands: a British university, a leading business school in the UK and its Asian partner institution. The article uses a case study for theory-building within the qualitative research tradition. Among the phenomenological findings presented by the authors is the identification of three types of brand identification. Any student identification with a university brand is built on factors such as awareness, knowledge and experience. Furthermore, the investigated relationships with the brands were categorised according to the types of clients: brand member (a legally binding relationship); brand supporter (a trusted relationship); and brand owner (a proprietorial relationship). Furthermore there are also differences in the management of corporate brands to be taken into account, in particular with regard to the permanent renewal of brands. The authors make it clear that only a caring approach to management has the potential of securing a high degree of brand identification and actualisation. In addition, the article provides a good overview of the philosophical underpinnings of university brand management.

Three years later Balmer, Liao and Wang (2010) argue that at business schools the maintenance, reflection and support of a values approach will result in varying brand identification intensities when comparing students and faculty. The pivotal importance of corporate branding to higher education institutions is made more than evident by this study. The data is drawn from the insights of decision makers and policy advisers in leading business schools. This study is also a good source of best practice examples from top business schools which can be regarded as having a combined expertise both in business administration and management operations. As such, this study has a special significance for higher education institutions in general.

In his excellent article, Beneke (2010) gives an impressive account of the various aspects of brand reputation management by higher education institutions, with an emphasis on case studies from South Africa. The author has the intention to demonstrate that an increase of the appeal of institutional brands is absolutely essential for the recruitment of top students, which is part of the strategic plan of most universities around the world anyway. This necessitates that all branding efforts of the institution are cohesively aligned. The author suggests that as in any other type of enterprise, a university brand has the advantage of low risks for students when deciding to enrol at a university and gives the universities a certain amount of continuous success over the years. It is

interesting to note that Beneke considers multifaceted brands as a no-go for university managers. Chapleo (2004) interviews higher education managers in order to find out how they cope with these challenges. He examines their understanding and interpretation of reputation and their attitude towards brand management. As a result, the need for differentiation of universities is emphasized and the lack of models is considered as a major obstacle on the way to branded universities.

### *2.9 Philosophical and psychological foundations of branding*

Western philosophy has made some major contributions to branding theories, although a genuine philosophy of branding has not emerged so far. Braun (2004, p.141) was one of the first authors that declared that branding is "a legitimate subject of philosophical enquiry" and provided useful insights regarding the crucial role of philosophy in branding. He refers to a number of philosophers who made essential statements on the subject without using the terms 'brands' or 'branding' explicitly. Modern histories of Western philosophy, such as the standard work of Anthony Kenny (2012), however, do not refer to brands or branding in their index either.

Branding is closely connected to a number of fundamental human desires and needs, in particular the need to trust as well as to identify with certain products and services. The psychological basis for these sentiments has been laid down in a number of theories and other scientific elaborations. In addition, all scientific approaches to the world of brands are grounded in a philosophical view of the human mind and social interactions. Most of the concepts used in the context of brands and branding have their origins in philosophy, psychology or sociology. The literature of these fields helps brand managers in some way to understand the functional elements of brands as well as their deeper qualities and lasting nature in a world of permanent innovation and paradigmatic turns. Several philosophical scholars give in their writings a sense of direction and structure for brand management. Psychological findings provide a scientific approach to client understanding since brands exist first of all as thoughts in their mind. Thus emphasis is laid upon their motivations and desires. The development of the so-called brand empiricism depends to a great extent upon psychological methods and approaches. This becomes obvious in the paper by Chapleo (2005) who investigated the opinion of university leaders on which universities in Great Britain have successful brands, trying to identify higher education institutions worthy of being considered as models. He started his inquiry with the philosophical question of 'what are brands?'.

The current literature on educational aspects of branding centres a great deal on selection criteria. Universities are interested in the reasons why a student would select a certain branded institutions for taking up an academic study programme. Surveys among university applicants (e. g. Cavanagh, 2015) made it obvious that selecting a particular brand is more an act of aligning with a certain set of values than the rational analysis of advantages and disadvantages. As a matter of fact, for instance,

while the average consumer likes to associate with opinion leaders and celebrities in sharing their preferences with regard to favourite brands, most students take their brand orientation from their peers. Thus also sociological issues come into the picture. Phenomena like signing up behind a 'general will' - as first described by Rousseau (Wokler, 1995) - are not uncommon to the world of branding, in which the plea for popular sovereignty has been adopted as a marketing rule. A sign of success of a branding activity, however, would be having turned the 'general will' of having a particular product, such as the latest model of the iPad, into the 'will of all', which means soaring the sales. The difference can be explained in the following way:

> “Rousseau distinguished between 'the general will' and 'the will of all'. An individual's will may go contrary to the general will. There is often considerable difference between the will of all and the general will. The latter is concerned only with the common interest, the former with interests that are partial, being itself but the sum of particular wills” (Kenny, 2012, p.722-723).

This particular view is supported also by the philosophy of Hegel (Shelton, 1913) who claims that individuals, which could as well be individual universities, only fulfil their real function and purpose when they are subsumed in a greater entity such as society and follow its common interest.

The concept Nietzsche (Lampert, 1986) describes as the “Übermensch (Beyond Man)” can be easily transferred to the sphere of branding where the creation of superbrands has been discussed once and again by authors such as Kralingen (1999). These are brands which create their own realms with values which redefine the market and its rules. This is also the driving force for achieving what they dare to become. In higher education such superbrands would be the Ivy League or Russell Group universities.

The philosophy of branding also creates the mindset for the understanding and management of the brand equity. It helps to discover the inherent characteristics of the brand and select an intellectual model that works for it. Although Karl Popper had pointed out that scientific theories hardly can be proved as correct, their acceptance depends largely on successful practical applications. In the case of branding it is usually the commercial success that counts. In order to accomplish a successful branding strategy a number of theories will have to be combined or existing theories will have to be replaced by new and more productive ones. Therefore it is one of the aims of this study to introduce new ways of thinking and provide stimuli that lead to new models and practical applications, tailored to the higher education environment. Examples from commercial enterprises will reveal theoretical constructs that can move higher education brands forward. In his early publication “The logic of scientific discovery”, Popper (1959) argues that a single approach can hardly be justified for scientific

projects and in order to achieve a better practical outcome, a pluralistic viewpoint has to be taken. Since this is also true for branding activities, this study is to encourage innovative approaches as well as constructive criticism of established branding practices of universities, as has been exemplified in the article by Chapleo (2011).

### *2.10 Modern theories and the idea of the archetype*

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the field of branding has increasingly developed as a separate discipline with emerging theories and a solid literature base. However, the vast majority of the research and the drivers for the developing theories are firmly based in business and industry, not in educational or the not-for-profit type of institutions. An exception of this would be the work of Holt (2004), who has developed what he calls "cultural branding" principles with a focus upon identity myths, strong symbolism, as well as on intuition and serendipity rather than on methodology. This wider focus, then, has given branding theories a wider acceptance in academia at large.

In the previous century, the publications by Wittgenstein contributed substantially to an understanding of brands as tools. In his Tractatus logico-philosophicus (Wittgenstein, 1922), he describes the correlations between perceptions and thought on the one hand and linguistic expressions such as brand names on the other hand. This is of high relevance for the understanding of the labelling function of brands. Similar to a picture, a brand depicts the same elements as the entity it represents: “According to the Tractatus any picture must have in common with what it depicts. This shared minimum Wittgenstein calls the logical form” (Kenny, 2012, p.797). In other words, representations and reality share the same logical form. As much as some detergents stand for whiteness, Harvard University stands for research excellence. Thus Wittgenstein's logical form could be a convenient vantage point when creating brands. The purpose of a logical form is that it brings the brand and the object it represents into alignment so that the trademark that clients remember becomes a generic term. The best known example of this phenomenon would be 'hoover' for vacuum cleaner or 'Oxbridge' for leading universities. Since most brands will become synonymous with one of their outstanding benefits, the striving for distinctiveness can act as the essence for a university brand if this is deemed to be an asset. Most brand developers, however, have to make sure, that their brand has to stand for more than one aspect. Even for universities it is not sufficient for its brand to offer the logical form of one speciality only. Although the University Mozarteum Salzburg stands for music, it offers dramatic arts as one of its curricula. There are other aspects of a brand besides picturing reality for which Wittgenstein's philosophy offers solutions. In his Philosophical Investigations (Wittgenstein, 1953), he provides insights which help to develop the brand as a tool rather than a picture. He also introduces the concept of 'meaning' based upon the

complete usage and all the values of a word or name. The management of brand meaning (Batey, 2008) is pivotal for place and nation building as well as for applications in higher education, since a university is a place of research, teaching and employment simultaneously under the same brand. It derives its meaning not from making a surrogacy, but from the diversity of services and the many applications as a tool by their stakeholders every day.

A brand's individualism and authenticity can be considered as the greatest asset that secures its existence. Nowadays the focus has switched from giving a brand meaning to giving it impact by making it an object of love and dedication (see lovemarks). Thus they become active players in the lives of their stakeholders, once it has become their intention to foster a certain brand. The latter aspect has also been brought into discussion by Wittgenstein:

> “It was in reaction to Russell's account of desire and expectation that Wittgenstein began to develop his later philosophy of mind. What was wrong with Russell's account, he said, was precisely that it ignored intentionality; and he agreed with Husserl that intentionality was all-important if we were to understand language and thought” (Kenny, 2012, p.916-917).

Also the understanding of how brands function depends upon this insight. If brands are able to arouse desire and expectation, they remain mental items until they are given their intentionality by an act of meaning, significance or sense.

Following the existentialist philosophers, the most successful brands utilize the power of myths, because “myths are useful fabrications that stitch back together otherwise damaging tears in the cultural fabric of the nation” (Holt, 2004, p.8). Furthermore, they express eternal truths such as that of the admirable role of a hero or some other archetype as described by C.G. Jung. With regard to the hero he says: “Since this archetype is numinous, i.e., possesses a specific energy, it will attract to itself the contents of consciousness – conscious ideas that render it perceptible and hence capable of conscious realization” (Jung, 1989, p.13). The first authors who applied this knowledge to experiential marketing were Mark and Pearson (2001). They explored the archetypal basis of successful brands and discovered twelve frequently applied archetypes in commercial activities. With regard to universities certain qualities are linked to the hero image: “The highest level hero organizations are also principled and have clearly articulated convictions that inform practice and are not just rhetoric” (Mark & Pearson, 2001, p.112). In other words, excellence in applied sciences and arts is most likely the pivot for creating a hero-type brand. Historically viewed, universities being addressed as “alma mater” attempted to comply with the archetype of the “mother”, which is of course a brand personality that most people can have a close relationship to. Douglas B. Holt (2014) claims that iconic brands can create "identity myths" characterized by a powerful symbolism. He

doubts that conventional branding strategies, which focus on emotional relationships, have the potential to create icon. These would require a stronger cultural orientation utilizing aspects such as targeting, positioning, brand equity, and brand loyalty.

### *2.11 The history of brands*

Conceived as identifiers of origin, brands have evolved into sophisticated business tools over the centuries. The Anglo-Saxon usage of the term brand can be derived from its original meaning of something that burns or is burned. Originally, the brand-mark was used by farmers for stamping symbols of ownership onto their livestock. Consequently, farmers with a higher reputation and product quality could be easily identified by their clients. In this way the utility of brands as a guide for selection and purchase has been established and has been appreciated as such until the present time. The number of intermediaries between producers and consumers increased over the centuries which increased the necessity of brands as producer identifications. WIPO (2013) sees three timelines in world history when brands had a decisive impact on the economic development of human society: the first one was in the Middle Ages when trans-border trading evolved, the second one was during the industrial revolution when mass markets were created and the third one was the recent turn of the century when the widespread use of the internet enabled online commerce and the creation of cyberbrands. The Museum of Brands in London offers a brilliant overview of the historical development of commercial brands, including their design and packaging. The commercial use of brands, however, was developed only during the second half of the nineteenth century. The industrial revolution introduced the mass-production of consumer goods and with it a bewildering diversity of choice which necessitated branding in order to indicate quality and origin. The famous stoneware producer Josiah Wedgwood was a pioneer in this respect, producing branded pottery from the 1760s (http://www.wedgwood.co.uk/content/wedgwood-heritage/ ). Previously burned marks were succeeded by marks stamped on goods such as pottera and precious metals (hallmarks) or printed on labels of other products. Ono (1999) points out that by the end of the 19$^{th}$ century marks of origin became global practice. Simultaneously, the protection of brands was made possible through the invention of trademarks both for product and services. At the beginning of the twentieth century, trademark laws gave brands a legal basis both in Europe and in the USA (Richardson, 2008). The focus shifted to brand name protection, and a new profession had to be created: the brand manager registering trademarks and commissioning packaging design. Increasingly, the asset value of brands has been realized and acknowledged not only by entrepreneurs but also by investors.

Later in the century, the impact of branding shifted again by joining with the emerging mass media and the new opportunities for advertising. Throughout history, branding had to adapt permanently to innovations in information technologies. The new advertising professionals and PR managers

utilized emerging academic disciplines such as psychoanalysis to achieve their aims. Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud, was one of the pioneers of “public relations” and the first leading marketing psychologist was Ernest Dichter, a born Viennese. He claimed that brand owners ought to define their brands through a brand personality which can serve as a unique selling proposition thus ensuring distinctiveness and brand leadership. His work was central to establishing the notion of ‘brand image’ in marketing (Logemann, 2015). Finally, consumer behaviour was again influenced by the ample availability of the internet in recent years. Authors like Alvin Toffler (1980) created the notion of the producer-consumer, or ‘prosumer’, back in the 1980s. Today prosumers are mainstream due to the opportunities of  interactive branding approaches. In our century with the advent of a knowledge-based society, there has been an enormous shift from product brands to service brands and further on to virtual brands. Thus brands promise not only desirable and well-differentiated products and services, but also visions of lifestyle that will meet the clients' expectations and dreams. The brand experience has gradually become the supreme aim and organising principle of branding activities. Brands, however, can only be built upon promises and trust as long as they remain both present and credible. In particular, managers of services brands have to invest substantially in internal and external communication, be it training or advertising, to satisfy customers consistently by keeping their brands' publicity.

A number of conventional media such as audio applications will have a future impact on branding as we learn from Gustafsson (2015, p.20): “Although Sonic Branding – branding with music and sound – has been seen as ‘the next big thing’ in branding toward consumers for about a decade, it is a scattered field still waiting for its breakthrough.” With the advent of social media most effective channels for communication and marketing started flourishing, in particular with a view to the younger generation (Brinker, 2012). The group of young adults has been the traditional client of universities which has been supplemented by senior citizens and school children in recent years. A university has to make sure that its brand is considered by young people when they first start thinking about studying. As first impressions go a long way, a number of Austrian universities have decided to offer summer courses to young children, the so-called “Kinderuniversität” (http://www.kinderuni.at/). Fascinating research activities are meant to arouse the interest of both children and parents for a professional life in academia. At the end of these courses follows a pompous graduation ceremony with caps and gowns, because traditions and heritage can make certain brands more trusted and recognized. As a rule, university brands have been developed over centuries starting in times when branding has not been realized as a concept; in the case of the University of Vienna, there has been a time span of 650 years. Eventually, however, it has been necessary to revitalize the university brand by modernizing the brand proposition and undertaking a complete relaunch. King's College London can serve as a recent example for such an endeavour.

Academic cornerstones of branding education were set at the Universities of Bradford (England), Brunel (London) and Strathclyde (Scotland) offering master course in branding.

In their introduction Teixeira and Dill (2011) give an extensive account of the history of branding and marketization with regard to higher education and reach the following conclusion: “The increasing presence of market mechanisms has reshaped the reality of higher education, both at the system and at lower levels, and HEIs around the world are facing in their daily activities the implications of marketization” (Teixeira and Dill, 2011, p. xvi f.). As a matter of fact, there has always existed a semantic rivalry between 'brand' and 'reputation' on the one hand (Chapleo, 2004), and 'hallmark' (Temple, 2014) on the other hand. The following ngram shows their use over the centuries in the literature datafied by Google:

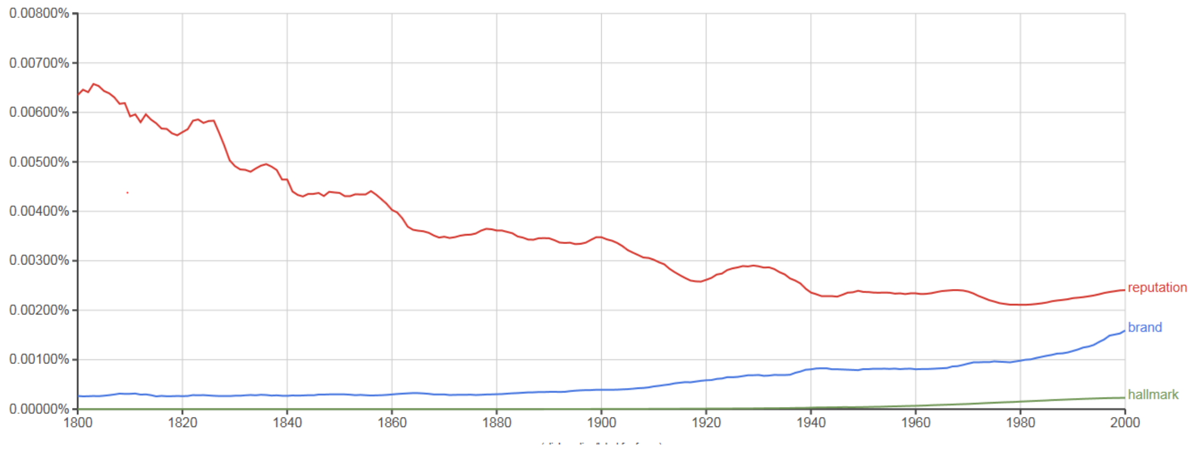


*Figure 2: Google Ngram Viewer (*[http://books.google.com/ngrams/](http://books.google.com/ngrams/))

It shows that until 1970 the term 'reputation' was much more frequently used than 'brand', but then the usage started to converge. The term 'hallmark' reaches some significance only after 1980 (i.e. 0.0001533351%). The results of a survey done among university leaders give some clue as to the reasons for this: “The brand was less clearly defined than reputation, as is perhaps to be expected. There was a common opinion however, that brand is created or manufactured (whereas reputation evolves)...” (Chapleo, 2004, p.11). The proactive qualities of the brand have been appreciated as an advantage in recent years, in particular by higher education institutions.

Last but not least there are some institutions that also took financial advantage from the developers of brands: “Royal Holloway College (now Royal Holloway University of London) was founded in the 1880s on the fortune of Thomas Holloway, a Victorian pioneer of branding” (Temple, 2006, p.14).

# 3 Methodology

The aim of the study is to analyse and describe the possibilities that universities have of utilizing the power of branding for the benefit of their institutions. By examining the most up-to-date models, as well as practical expertise of enterprises that own leading brands, universities can learn how to optimize their brand value, and consequently their reputation. The aim of the project is therefore to develop theoretically defensible recommendations which can inform branding in the higher education sector. The structure and design of the study follows the suggestions provided by Chaudary (2014). The introductory chapters analyse the meaning of the concepts involved, and illustrate how they relate to the sphere of commercial activities. A number of these pertinent terms that are used by commercial institutions in this respect have thus far failed to reveal their practical meaning to educational institutions. In order to close this research gap, most chapters will not only provide terminological definitions for those concepts, but explain their usability in other, sometimes distant fields. This approach will also uncover the specificity and distance of discursive formations, that is the analogies and differences which Foucault (2002, p.178) tries to achieve by means of the following five tasks which are “to show:

- how quite different discursive elements may be formed on the basis of similar rules
- to what extent these rules do or do not apply in the same way
- how entirely different concepts occupy a similar position in the ramification of their system of positivity
- how a single notion may cover two archaeologically distinct elements
- how, from one positivity to another, relations of subordination or complementarity may be established.”

In order to achieve this methodological goal, qualitative data will be used for the development of a modular construct and/or model, which is then tested against archival research and in a small survey based on those constructs. One of the purposes of this survey was to record the participants' perceptions of their institutions' brand and how that relates to their professional functions, responsibilities and professional orientation. This survey will contribute to the analysis of qualitative data from the literature by confirming or contextualizing observations derived from enterprises. Since the tools of traditional marketing strategies leverage only perceptions of companies as drivers of business goals, they are arguably less suitable for, or perhaps even alien to university leaders

without the necessary adaptation or at least some contextualisation. According to Sieber (1973) qualitative literature reviews and surveys can be useful complementary features in a research project. The larger part of the study is, however, dedicated to theoretical investigation of causalities, while a small section only deals with correlations derived from the data gained in the survey. The reason for this is because knowing why is considered far more important than only knowing what is the status quo. In this way university leaders will gain a better understanding of the facts that are intended to support their decisions and an in-depth comprehension of economic realities. The idea of understanding the reasons behind what makes an outstanding brand is supplemented by the attempt at finding associations in data collected from stakeholders.

### *3.1 The world of brands*

The nascent field of branding was first of all concerned with the implications to the corporate world of brands. Since the nineties of the previous century, there has been a shift towards other applications of branding, in particular, to the higher education environment. This study provides the necessary background for the creation of a tailor-made concept of the university brand. Drawing on various sources including a survey, the study offers possible approaches regarding theories, fundamentals, foundations, contexts and empirical insights. It also examines key constructs which allow university leaders to address the theoretical and practical aspects of their branding activities. Other references to empirical contributions of branding practices were taken primarily from the hospitality industry.

Balmer and Burghausen (2015) provide an excellent study of the major developments in the field of corporate heritage by conveying empirical and conceptual insights for branding activities such as the following:

> "In particular, the corporate heritage marketing notion of concurrent retrospective and prospective sense-making and sense-giving that also underpins organisational heritage is, arguably, of conceptual importance" (Balmer and Burghausen, 2015, p.407).

Corporate, as well as cultural, heritage can contribute considerably to the organisational identity and organisational memory of a higher education institution. The period to which the heritage refers can go back as long ago as the Middle Ages, in the case of Vienna for instance to the year 1365. The importance of cultural heritage custodianship is increasingly recognised by university leaders and informs the management of their core brand competencies. Traditionally, heritage has been used as a signifier which simply denotes a brand’s maturity and longevity. The significance of the past and of a temporal dimension for brands has only recently been described in the work of Balmer and Burghausen (2015).

Cooper et al. (2015) discuss their empirical research findings by comparing corporate heritage brands with brands developed only recently. By means of a four-dimensional framework guidance is provided in managing the challenges of corporate heritage brands. It goes without saying that university brand management requires additional dimensions. As such this study offers a conceptual framework offering fifteen dimensions to the higher education brand managers. In addition, it suggests a simple-to-use model, which, hopefully, will be of use for vice chancellors and marketing practitioners alike.

Branding techniques can offer novel opportunities to universities which intend to build a reputable identity which will be recognisable for rankings. They also help them to discover ways and methods which measure success beyond rankings, provided they are tailored to the higher education environment and adequately implemented. There are examples of universities that are putting a lot of effort into branding (such as the UK's Leicester - 'elite but not elitist' - or Melbourne 'Australia's 1st University') and at the same time are also among the most well regarded at the international level. This correlation can serve as an argument that, along with other aspects, professional branding of universities has an impact on their international standing. The subsequent increase of world-wide recognition will help them to attract adequate research funds and faculties that are necessary for becoming world-class universities or flagship-universities, as the Americans would call them.

The empirical data was collected mainly from a group of peers, connected by the framework of ResearchGate, which admits only academics as its members. The approach of investigating the perceptions of others can serve as evidence and proof of the validity of theoretical assumptions.

The online collection of the data was supported by Surveymonkey. 38 questions were integrated into a questionnaire used for convenience sampling via social media networks which are widespread in the higher education setting, such as ResearchGate and LinkedIn. Considering the fact that brands can even be sold through social media (Elósegui, 2013), it should be appropriate to collect data and branding knowledge via the same channel. By putting an invitation in a blog, data gathered from researchers using social media can be collected in an anonymous way. Since the respondents are a targeted, but self-selected group of people with a professional interest in the topic, the participation can lead to a win-win situation. As such, the questions were designed to find out the factors that are of relevance to the brand orientation of a higher education institution using the knowledge of their members. The multiple choice replies offered follow a five-point Likert scale (see chapter 5).

Another source of inspiration has been the survey carried out by Baumgarth (2009), albeit choosing museums as his target public-sector institutions. A similar approach was undertaken by Harvest in June of 2003, when it conducted an international online survey of over thirty five graduate students

from various higher education institutions.  Its aims were to learn what these graduates valued of their overall experience of tertiary education, as well as to investigate their current opinion of these universities. The result was a brand chart of five categories of American colleges and universities including a list of the institutions that best represent them. The survey responses made it obvious that prospective students use a combination of rational and emotional drivers when choosing their university. The depth and breadth of the curriculum turned out to be the key factor in this decision process. But a further factor came into the picture to a considerable degree: "Overall reputation is another critical aspect for most respondents. Reputation is not just restricted to academics, but covers many other areas of the university experience, such as the personality of the student body, quality of campus life, and most importantly, brand associations with the university or college" (Harvest, 2003, p.7).

### *3.2 The art of translation*

The usefulness of doing interdisciplinary research prior to the implementation process of a university brand has been considered as a success factor by the University of Rhode Island (Dholakiaa and Acciardob, 2014). Translational research has been chosen as the dominant research agenda for this study. Ertmer and Glazewski (2014, p.55) define a research agenda as "a framework that allows you to attack a topic from multiple vantage points". In order to coordinate the different views of the various vantage points, the method of triangulation appears to be most suitable. In order to make the proposed research agenda robust, it has to focus on a research question that is part and parcel of an established theoretical framework (Whetten, 1989), and firmly backed up by other works coming from in the same domain. A research question is meaningful, if it is informed by practice – particularly in a professional doctoral programme - and if it addresses challenges that other experts also perceive as such. This leads to a situation which can be described as follows: "As a new problem or set of problems comes into view in the world of learning, there is an influx of researchers from adjacent areas, bringing with them the paradigms and models that have proved fruitful in their own fields" (Holmes, 2000, p.172). Marketing practitioners from commercially oriented enterprises need to take particular care when dealing with the higher education environment in a marketing and branding context. They ought to take note of the crucial differences and adapt an understanding of brands beyond a mere marketplace orientation. It is inevitable that the specific institutional context of universities is taken into account including its societal goals and stakeholder obligations. It is widely acknowledged that the spectrum of a higher education brand is wider, more sophisticated and unique. Thus this study puts a special emphasis upon the relevance and importance of the HE brand orientation.

Furthermore, Weick (1989, p.528) is also aware of the role of translations in the process of theory construction: “While a reality check might catch these subtle, self-serving translations of theoretical analysis into theoretical advocacy, these translations also can be partially caught by disciplined application of evolutionary rules of thumb to thought trials”. In this study project, translational research confers the findings of one field (i.e. economics and marketing) to another field (i.e. higher education management). This translation is deemed necessary because enterprises and universities have a different brand orientation (see Figure 1).

| Enterprise | University |
|---|---|
| Attention | Participation |
| Inform | Inspire |
| Transaction | Interaction |
| Return on Investment | Return on Involvement |
| Market | Society |

*Figure 1: Comparison of brand orientation (adapted after Roberts, K., 2004)*

Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997), for instance, use translation as an extended metaphor for what the entrepreneurial university is up to following the triple helix model, based upon the partnership between government, industry and higher education. “If branding is approached in higher education in the same way it might be approached if a normal consumer service were to be marketed, we have seen that quite a few problems arise” (Temple, 2006, p.17). In his view branding can only work in higher education, if universities are treated as “unusual organisations”. In particular, Teferra (2014) has made an accurate description of all the differences and paradigmatic discrepancies that divide the commercial and academic world. Mats Urde (1994) calls brand orientation a strategy for survival and for this reason it is clear that most university leaders are hesitant to consult the widely available handbooks on brands and branding. Due to their entrepreneurial orientation those works of reference are as unsuitable to the purpose as a conventional love story would be to someone with a deviant sexual orientation (Warren, 2009). This similarity with the various manifestations of love is also supported by the following quotation from Kevin Roberts (2004, back cover): “The idealism of love is the new realism of business. By building respect and inspiring love, business can move the world”. Since both respect and love are the ingredients of reputation, a specific section on reputational rankings (see chapter 6.6.2) has been included. The juxtaposition of ‘idealism’ (theory) and ‘realism’ (practice) in this quotation indicates that a ‘translation’ is inevitable. The aim of applicability of the knowledge gained is also emphasized in the following quotation:

> “The aim of translational research should be to increase the knowledge base to determine what applications may be possible, whereupon more highly directed approaches can be taken. Therefore, while a more directed approach might be needed when the problem to be solved is more urgent, it is usually more effective to identify research objectives in a broadly scoped manner, giving freedom for the individual researcher to propose a specific programme within that wider umbrella, and to pursue that research wherever it may lead” (Nurse, 2015, p.5).

In the pertinent literature (Woolf, 2008), the term translational research refers not only to projects involving different types of research or projects adopting results from other disciplines, but also project adopting best practices from other fields. Used as a concept for medical studies as early as 1993, it has been quickly taken over by a number of other fields of studies (Weissmann, 2005). Hasitschka (2014), for instance, describes a translational project concerning cultural studies at the University of Music and Dramatic Art in Vienna. As a matter of fact, translation theories have a long tradition in language studies and have given rise to the development of a distinct linguistic branch. These theories come in handy in many areas of the humanities, when they either cross disciplinary borders or adopt methods and models from other spheres of activities. Bachmann-Medick (2009, p.4) speaks of a 'translational turn': “At that point scholarly thinking and perceptions themselves become translational as moves gather pace towards border thinking, towards greater interest in interstices and a focus on mediation”. There have been some previous attempts of translation, at least of the commercial terms used in branding, as in the following glosses: “In a university environment, product becomes academic programs, price is tuition and financial aid, promotion is the communications program and place refers to the delivery system for academic programs” (Khanna, M. et al., 2014, p.125).

The very essence of translational research is the application of analogies, because “when people make analogies, they call on sophisticated reasoning mechanisms that, through intricate machinations, somehow manage to link together far-flung domains of knowledge” (Hofstadter and Sander, 2013, p.16). The study will link together the knowledge of how to create experiences in the domains of education and marketing. There are both striking similarities and decisive differences which have to be taken into account when addressing the consumer on the one hand and the student on the other hand, and in particular in a combined approach that follows the concept of a “student-prosumer” (Toffler, 1980) in the sense of a participatory culture.

There are numerous examples in the history of science and scholarship which back up the notion that solutions found in one field can show the way to researchers in another discipline including the Arts: “Thus analogy-making, far from being merely an occasional mental sport, is the very lifeblood of

cognition, permeating it at all levels, ranging all the way from mundane perceptions … to subtle artistic insights and abstract scientific discoveries (such as general relativity).” (Hofstadter and Sander, 2013, p.19). As a matter of fact, many scientists, foremost amongst them Albert Einstein (1920) applied more or less this method or as Hofstadter and Sander (2013, p.32) put it: “the history of mathematics and physics consists of a series of snowballing analogies”. Cornelissen et al. (2011, p.1705) point at the potential that analogies can have with regard to strategic change, a prerequisite for rebranding exercises: “A crucial way of invoking or constructing categories for novel instances such as a strategic change involves using analogical or metaphorical frames that can create or expand categories of understanding in order to incorporate the change”. They also claim that by “verbally referring to analogous cases and domains of experience, organisational leaders can guide thinking and thus create understanding and social acceptance of change” (loc. cit.). A further example of this approach is the guest editorial that Baumgarth and O'Reilly (2014) prepared for the Arts Marketing Journal in which they analyse the transfer of branding concepts from the commercial world to the arts world by various authors. There are also historical roots to this approach. Gavin (2003) explains how the case method was transferred from the law school of Harvard University to the business school and consequently to all other disciplines.

In this study, a clear analogy will be drawn between the educational experience and the brand experience. There is an abundance of principles and strategies that apply to both domains. This fact is the key for universities to a profound understanding and successful development of their branding activities. Since higher education institutions as a rule cannot afford to establish and sustain large branding departments with professional teams, as is the case in the consumer products industry, they have to outsource the respective projects or base them on a co-operation between the public relations office and the education department. The latter could well provide the insights from Dewey’s theory (1997) and translate the findings of experiential education to the area of experiential branding practices. In other words, they could deconstruct the educational theory into its core components and reconstruct them in a form that they become useful for a branding project, following a sort of post-structural approach. Although this procedure is fairly common, it belongs to one of the most demanding ones in scholarship: “There is nothing wrong with the analytic tools we have at our disposal, but their application requires careful thought. It requires contextual intelligence: the ability to understand the limits of our knowledge and to adapt that knowledge to an environment different from the one in which it was developed” (Khanna, 2014, p. 58).

### *3.3 The advent of a theory*

There are a number of research questions which form the basis of my current research project. The core question, however, is: does the distinctiveness of a university contribute to its distinction? Bourdieu (1984) defines 'distinction' as a wealth of cultural capital, which is also an appropriate asset of higher education institutions, in particular to the universities with art-based programmes. The development of a recognizable distinctiveness has to go hand in hand with the creation of a unique brand. This relatively simple question will be continually refined in its focus and linked to related questions of higher complexity. Simultaneously, the underlying assumptions and transformations have to be made explicit by scientific interrogation and reflective thinking. Foucault (2002, p.190f.) lists the necessary steps to be taken in "the analysis of transformations" and recommends describing the following aspects:

- "how the different elements of a system were transformed
- how the characteristic relations of a system of formation were transformed
- how the relations between different rules of formation were transformed
- how the relations between various positivities were transformed".

A major transformation takes place when a theory is specified to a particular field of application. Thus one of the primary aims of this project is to deduct a special theory of branding for higher education institutions from the general theory of branding as developed by the numerous works described in the literature review (see chapter 2). The inspiration for this approach has been taken from the work of Eugen Wüster (2003), who developed both a General Theory of Terminology and a specialised theory with regard to the machine tool. Weick (1989) warns researchers not to favour validation to usefulness in theory construction. For him a good theory is "a source of unexpected connections, high in narrative rationality, aesthetically pleasing, or correspondent with presumed realities" (Weick, 1989, p.517).

Theories are abstract ideas about how things work and form the basis for the formulation of causal hypotheses. They cannot be replaced by statistical analysis of mere correlations as is expressed by the following quotation: "Scientists are trained to recognize that correlation is not causation, that no conclusions should be drawn simply on the basis of correlation between X and Y (it could just be a coincidence). Instead, you must understand the underlying mechanisms that connect the two. Once you have a model, you can connect the data sets with confidence. Data without a model is just noise" (Anderson, 2008, s. p.). In other words, correlations do not confirm certainty, they only indicate probability or identify useful proxies of a phenomenon. By means of a sound correlation analysis one

can verify that these proxies are suitable and base predictions on the correlation itself. Furthermore, correlations point the way for causal investigations and clear insights. Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier (2013, p. 72) make it clear, that data-based research relies both on workable models and theories: “Similarly, when we analyze the data, we choose tools that rest on theories. And as we interpret the results we again apply theories. The age of big data clearly is not without theories – they are present throughout, with all that this entails”.  As a consequence, the data obtained from the survey (see chapter 5) can only take the role of a supplement to what is laid down in the theoretical chapters. A theory is a formalized model that is both generalizable and predictive, and therefore can be used prescriptively. The importance of theories has been underlined also in the literature of business administration. The following quotation can serve as one of the most convincing examples:

> “Theories define expectations about causal relationships. They enable counterfactual reasoning: If my theory accurately describes my world, then when I choose this, the following will occur. They are dynamic and can be updated on the basis of contrary evidence or feedback. Just as academic theories enable scientists to generate breakthrough knowledge, corporate theories are the genesis of value-creating strategic actions. They provide the vision necessary to step into uncharted terrain, guiding the selection of what are necessarily uncertain strategic experiments. A better theory yields better choices” (Zenger, 2013a, p.8).

Such an integral approach – juxtaposing academic and entrepreneurial views - could also lead to a new metatheory, which can be considered as a further outcome and added value of the project:

> “Integral approaches suggest that identifying interrelationships between existing forms of knowledge may create new knowledge. This takes us beyond simple accumulation and moves toward more effective approaches. This, in turn, implies the need for methods for creating theory and metatheory – where they are understood to be integrated knowledge, rather than simple accumulations. When one identifies relationships between previously unconnected bits of knowledge one tends to experience a sudden, perhaps spiritual, sense of wonderment or awakening. And, one is on the path to the creation of theory and metatheory” (Wallis, 2010, p.108).

In pursuit of this method, various theories from the field of philosophy, psychology and sociology can be combined and utilized for the analysis and explanation of branding practices (see chapter 3). In the end and as a result, new knowledge can be created and a vision provided, thus fulfilling the required aims of a study. Foucault (2002) talks about discovering a new field of interpositivity. The relevance of analogies for innovation has been pointed out in Markman and Wood’s  (2009) work and can be summarized by the following quotation:

> "This vision gives rise to the image of analogies as being the fruit of strokes of genius, or at least of deep and unusual insights. And there are indeed numerous famous cases of this sort that one can cite great scientific discoveries resulting from sudden inspirations of people who found undreamt-of links between seemingly unrelated domains." (Hofstadter and Sander, 2013, p.16).

### *3.4 The role of a model*

The empirical inquiry regarding the brand orientation of higher education institutions was used to help validate the models developed from the literature. Consequently, the proposed model further elucidates the findings in the existing literature by following further dimensions be they contexual, instrumental or methodological. While theories are general descriptions of structure, models are descriptions of structure in a particular context. Structure is the perception of correlations and other linkages between things. In other words a scientific model is a causal explanation of how variables interact to produce a phenomenon, usually lineally organized. A model applies the technique of simplification so that only a few dominant variables will be outlined, measured, and perhaps controlled for experimentation. A model is used to create various hypotheses, which can be tested or used for explanatory purposes in a case study. There have been doubts regarding the validity of models in the social sciences due to the epistemological problem of the generalization of human behaviour, but models are widely accepted as an important methodological tool in translational studies. When describing a theoretical model one does not usually take any kind of quantitative approach, but present assumptions based on the literature covering the theoretical work.

# 4 The hospitality industry as a model

Among the many industries of the modern economy there is one which is particularly suitable for comparison with higher education institutions: it is the hospitality industry comprising hotels of various types and other service-oriented enterprises. Certain features of the brand orientation of hotels can be found in universities as well, especially in those which have dormitories and cafeteria as part of their campus. Therefore the brand management of certain types of hotels can serve as a model that can be somehow adapted to the higher education environment. Furthermore, a number of European universities have launched activities which are to establish a new 'welcome culture' at their institutions. Although it bears similarities with the concierge service in hotels, its aims go beyond it. While the hotel brand renders the vacation experience customers want, the university brand conveys the educational experience that students want; in both cases a similar emotional bondage is created. Similar to hotels, the EFQM award "Recognised for Excellence - 5 Star" has also been given to universities, for instance to the University of Applied Sciences in Vienna in June 2015.

Generally speaking one would say that both sectors use a similar approach to gaining competitive advantage:

> "Nowadays, companies' mission is achieving competitive advantage by means of value creation. As it was stated, the tourism industry is particularly client-oriented, so it becomes essential to deliver the elements which will result in customer satisfaction, brand enhancement, value creation, and consequently a steady competitive advantage" (Mattera and Moreno-Melgarejo, 2012, p.42).

The InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG, 2015) published a study on the occasion of the World Economic Forum 2015 in Davos, Switzerland, which provides evidence for the current crisis due to the lack of trust in many organisations both of the public and private sector. Its focus is on recent trends typical of the hospitality industry and other service-oriented businesses. This series of trend reports recommend procedures allowing institutions to build trust capital, thus forming a blueprint that can be followed in order to build trust within various social groups and across different cultures. Trust capital is considered to be the fourth column of entrepreneurial value, besides financial, human and intellectual capital (cf. Bourdieu, 1986), thus being an essential asset in creating a brand. A previous report (IHG, 2014) with the title 'Creating moments of trust - the key to building successful brand relationships in the kinship economy' has investigated the spectrum ranging from brand experiences to brand relationships with a special view to the hospitality sector and found that in

order to secure the loyalty of their guests in the future, hotels ought to offer a diverse, typically regional as well as distinctive experience which is tailor-made for the respective demographic group of clients. The concept of kinship has intimacy and altruism as characteristics which are to be transferred to the respective brands.

According to more recent research by Bresman (2015), the demographic development has led to a group of baby boomers (born 1946-1964) on the one hand and a group of millennials (born 1982-2000) on the other hand. These can be characterized by enormous differences with regard to their mentalities, world-views, and desires as travellers. These different approaches have evidently also considerable impact on their attitude towards and trust in brands. The great challenge for hotel brands is the strategic management of both of these groups simultaneously. Universities are facing a similar challenge since they are dealing with the same demographic groups: the boomers, mainly represented by the faculty and the millennials, mainly represented by the students. In the IHG report the main differentiation is described as follows:

> "Again, we see that the things boomers desire from a hotel when travelling are things that millennials believe they can figure out for themselves using networks of friends and other sources. Millennials seem to prefer to trust themselves and 'people just like them' to decide on choosing a hotel brand. This is more than a facility with technology and the Internet: it is a mind-set; it is a sense of self-reliance and confidence; it is a world-view" (IHG, 2015, p.16).

Universum, a global talent research and employer branding think tank has put the focus of its work on millenials and has gained insights which can be summarized in the following way: "Millennials strive for work-life balance, but this tends to mean work-me balance, not work-family balance. They want time for themselves and space for their own self-expression. Overall, the dominant definition was 'enough leisure time for my private life' (57%), followed by 'flexible work hours' (45%) and 'recognition and respect for employees' (45%)" (Bresman, 2015, p.4).

The importance of the 'kindred spirit' is the real challenge of a new kinship economy, emphasizing the social benefits of the brand experience. Thus it is also obvious in the higher education environment that people are "becoming more compassionate and socially responsible. They are becoming more vocal in supporting brands that do good things, and are boycotting or publicly berating those they believe to be irresponsible" (IHG, 2015, p.25). The recent boycott of the publisher Elsevier on the grounds of irresponsible subscription fees for journals gives strong evidence of this trend.

Yet there is another, perhaps more general aspect that clients of hotels share with those of universities: they are interested in relationships as well as experiences. The community of academic

practice has traditionally developed a kind of kinship among the stakeholders of the world of learning. For them it might even be easier to follow the advice of the InterContinental Hotels Group: "Brands succeed in the Kinship Economy through engagement that feels more like kinship and less like business as usual. Kinship adds a deepening of relationships to high quality experiences" (IHG, 2014, p.36). In service-oriented institutions where brands are based on intangible entities consumable only in an experiential manner, reputations of service-products are key because they have an unusual longevity. This is another characteristic trait that is shared with higher education institutions. The University of Reading, for instance, plans to create a longitudinal database of student well-being over the whole life cycle of degree programmes, from pre-application to post-graduation. This experiment has the potential to be of pioneering quality across the higher education sector because it does include both academic expectations and performance indicators, as well as non-academic factors, such as social life on campus, job opportunities and health. A first round of data was collected from the five iterations of a survey among 2,000 undergraduates, supplemented by a number of focus groups. The findings are a vital complement to measurement of employment outcomes in demonstrating the value of higher education and the brand of the university (Bell et al., 2015).

According to Jiang et al. (2002), there are a number of elements that hospitality enterprises need to build in order to manage the respective brands successfully which include quality, value, trust and last but not least credibility. It goes without saying that these are elements that universities require as well if they strive to improve their position in ranking schemes.

### *4.1 Leading Hotels*

Hotels, similar to universities, are usually ranked by category. The top category is made up by the leading brands of the industry, which created a roof brand bearing the term 'leading' in its name. This is also the case with "The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd." a world-class hospitality organization which 430 most distinguished properties belong to. Founded in 1928 by some brand-orientated European hoteliers, it started with a group of 38 members comprising hotels, resorts and spas. Its brand exemplifies excellence and dependability in the travel industry. Notwithstanding the overall goal of securing unique and authentic experiences, the hallmark of a "leading hotel" is only conveyed to hotels that offer accommodations of the highest levels of luxury or are known for their heritage and tradition. This has also been confirmed by Russo (2007, p.1) who says: "Especially critical for hotels in developing a relationship with prospective customers is the ability to differentiate their product offerings and evoke a positive presence or image. Over the years, numerous hotels have transformed their brand's image to represent quality, value, and consistent services, and, importantly, experiences".

Since hospitality aims not only towards commercial success, but is also an art and tradition, the defiance of mediocrity traits of distinctiveness have become the prevailing characteristic of the leading hotels. To maintain an internationally recognized spirit of service is the true responsibility of the luxury hotel business (LHW, 2015). To be considered for inclusion in the group of leaders, a hotel must ensure a unique and consistent hospitality experience to each guest, and be comparable with other holders of the leading hotels brand. Thus all aspects affecting guest comfort, convenience and originality are rated by the Executive Committee. While every hotel must meticulously maintain the highest service standards, they are eager to avoid the impression of conformity. Thus each hotel has its own unique personality determined partly by the culture of its location. The Plaza Athénée, for instance, is one of the most traditional hotels along the fashionable East Side of New York City between Madison and Park Avenues, it has earned its ranking as one of the American grand hotels since it opened in 1984. Its brand stands for the ultimate in European elegance and service. As a member of the Leading Hotels of the World it is a classic example of brand leadership in the hospitality industry.

Brand leadership research is an area also prone to translational methods: “We applied existing knowledge on leadership developed in the fields of human resource management and organizational behaviour” (Chang and Ko, 2014, p.77). Authors, such as Wilkins and Su (2013), characterize leaders as people who communicate authentically, connect easily with other people, and have immediate impact. In other words, they have what the authors call a "signature voice", which materializes in a demonstration of their authentic value and distinction, and in a positive way when it comes to connecting with others. Simpson (2012) distinguishes between managers, who do things right and leaders, who do the right things, which means that one needs a vision as well as experience in order to fulfil the role of a leader. This is also true of leading institutions, be they hotels or universities.

According to Chang and Ko (2014), brand leadership is to be based on the following factors: quality, value, innovativeness and popularity. Rosemary Stamp (2010) emphasizes the need for agility as previously novel or leading attributes become standard practice of the market. Leading universities, such as those of Oxford, Cambridge, Leiden or Munich have formed an alliance similar to that of the leading hotels: the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Founded in 2002 as a mission group of twenty-one research-oriented universities holding top positions in international rankings, LERU has become a major lobbyist for higher education at the European policy level. These can only be met by creating an awareness of the frontiers of human knowledge and the tackling of grand societal challenges through basic research. Furthermore, it promotes applied research which is the ultimate source of innovation in society and a great capacity for responding to novel opportunities and unsolved scientific problems. The purpose of LERU according to their mission statement and

position papers is to improve higher education frameworks in Europe and to encourage best practice among its members.

### *4.2 Boutique hotels*

This category is chosen by hotel guests seeking excellence and service on a more intimate level. The boutique hotels are characterized by fewer than a hundred guest rooms and suites providing the distinctive experience of a private home or mansion. A typical example would be the Hotel Savoy of Prague, located in the city centre next to the Prague Castle. It is considered a unique oasis of charm and elegant décor. It features a glass cupola that can be opened to reveal an intimate garden setting. The hotel was built in 1882 in the art nouveau tradition, originally serving as the meeting place for the local cultural elite and thus earning its rank among the world's finest boutique hotels.

Preferred Boutique is a brand of the Preferred Hotel Group that offers the boutique hotel experience in over 150 member hotels. Preferred Boutique has gradually developed as a brand that is defined by the following features: a size of 100 rooms or less, the uniqueness of design, an extravagant style, and services on an intimate scale. They comprise mansions, chalets as well as urban historic houses and retreats on secluded islands such as Peter Island in the Caribbean. In order to secure brand loyalty, guests are encouraged to join the iPrefer guest loyalty programme. Since its foundation in 2005, Preferred Boutique member hotels have been selected from the best destinations. The Preferred Hotel Group thus seem to put great emphasis upon what Hankinson (2012) describes as destination branding. This type of branding is – as much as higher-education-branding – highly dependent upon the development of a strong brand orientation, a factor that seems to be missing in many cases due to the necessary research efforts:

> "This failure to examine the transferability of brand orientation to destination branding is particularly surprising in view of the unusual characteristics of destination brand management. Destination brands represent unique combinations of buildings, businesses, and venues managed by a multiplicity of autonomous organisations" (Hankinson, 2012, p.975).

Van Rooijen (2014) translated the model of the boutique hotel to the higher education environment. In his article on boutique universities he claims that in small-scale institutions of higher learning the satisfaction of students is much higher and their experience of studying is more rewarding than in institutions aiming at attracting the masses. Notwithstanding these merits, he has considerable doubts as to whether this type of university is capable of developing sustainable brands:

> "One therefore might assume that boutique universities are either on the way up, expanding into a full blown university, or on the way down, being swallowed up by a larger institution,

> subject to an M&A, or simply destined for a shut-down. And that would be regrettable because there seems to be a role for such boutique universities, since not all students will prosper in mass education. So is there a way to achieve an even keel for the smaller scale institution?" (Van Rooijen, 2014, p.1).

The answer might well be found by looking at the hospitality industry which is most successful with group formations as part of their brand strategy (O'Neill and Mattila, 2010). The smaller scale makes it also easier for higher education institutions to stay focused, which usually leads to an increase in brand reputation:

> "Institutions with a detailed focus on a specific discipline achieve reputational excellence in that specialty. For example, the London Business School and INSEAD are much smaller than the other universities ranked among the 2014 Top 10 universities in business studies, but their granular approach led them toward the fifth and sixth position among global reputations in this narrow area" (Thomson Reuters, 2015, p.10).

### *4.3 Hotel communities*

Hellmann (2012, p.26) describes the intellectual controversy between Habermas and Luhmann on the theory of social systems as a "brand war in social science". Such brand wars become particularly evident when large brand communities exist, i.e. networks of brand conscious clients, who compete with each other and are prone to any sort of hostility. In higher education distinctive schools of thought might fall into these categories. In the sphere of management, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) as well as Atkins (2004) have described the characteristics and functionalities of brand communities, especially their development of identity through diversity, distinctiveness and differentiation.

A good example of this type of brand community would be the Preferred Hotel Group, which is considered a flagship in the hospitality industry comprising over 650 hotels and resorts in 85 countries. They are the destination of guests who appreciate the diversity offered by the numerous sub-brands such as "Preferred Pride", "Preferred Residences" etc. (Russo, 2007). Having its headquarters in Chicago with 40 branch offices all over the world, the Preferred Hotel Group brings a certain competitive advantage to single hotel entrepreneurs through its world-wide operations. It provides strategic planning and an exceptional level of services and amenities due to the succesful leadership by the Ueberroth family members (Hawk, 2009). Another example would be the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), an equally successful roof brand of the hospitality industry,

The benefits of hotel groups have their exact counterpart in higher education institutions as we can learn from the Rector and CEO of the London School of Business and Finance (LSBF) and Chief Academic Officer at Global University Systems (GUS):

> “An alternative is to join a group, which can operate like a co-operative when it comes to sharing the expenditure of (international) marketing, information technology, essential expertise and some other central services that are sensitive to economies of scale. I have some experience that shows that the group structure can work extremely well because this is the set-up I introduced at my current company, Global University Systems, or GUS BV. I joined the company precisely two years ago, after having served as chief executive and rector magnificus of the Dutch leadership institution Nyenrode Business University” (Van Rooijen, 2014).

A specific type of community for higher education marketing purposes is the so-called “education hub”. These ambitious higher education groupings specialising in cross-border branding operate at the international as well as regional level (Lee, 2015). There are six countries which have started to develop education hubs: Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Botswana. In the case of the UAE, for instance, the hub houses forty different branch campuses of universities from abroad and other training institutions. Knight (2011, p.225) defines hubs as follows: “An education hub is a concerted and planned effort by a country (or zone, city) to build a critical mass of education/knowledge actors and strengthen its efforts to exert more influence in the new marketplace of education”. By all means they are brands because “being recognized as an education hub will increase a country’s reputation, competitiveness, and geopolitical status within the region and beyond” (Knight, 2011, p.237). The similarity with the hospitality sectors becomes obvious by the fact that in both cases added value is produced by connecting actors who collaborate in their marketing efforts, and share common facilities as well as financial resources.

# 5 Survey of the current branding orientation of universities

This chapter is shaped by the need for sampling the opinion of some of the various stakeholders belonging to a university with regard to their branding orientation. It uses the general brand management literature to develop a new brand orientation model and adapt it to the higher education context, which informs the basis for designing a small-scale empirical inquiry in the form of a survey described here. It is widely accepted that most of the challenges that turn up in a research project can usually be met once the data is collected and analysed. The results of this survey will also be compared to the findings of previous work, such as that of Baumgarth and Schmidt, who have organised similar surveys, in order to investigate the respective situation in museums (Baumgarth, 2009) and social enterprises (Schmidt and Baumgarth, 2014), similar quasi-market public sector institutions. Baumgarth's work (2009, p. 31) “examines the relationship between the 'internal anchorage' of a museum’s brand and the success of its 'product'”. The findings of this inquiry were to determine whether brand orientation is the key to the successful positioning of universities or not. Baumgarth, Merrilees and Urde (2013, p.978) paved the way for a wider acceptance of the importance of brand orientation by claiming:

> “If the brand-orientation paradigm were to attract as much academic attention and interest as the marketing orientation, and be accorded as much relevance in theory and practice, then the future opportunities for researchers would look very bright indeed.”

The survey of this study was carried out in an electronic version, with respondents being provided with the questionnaire by means of an invitation either conveyed to them by email or announced in a blog as a type of convenience sampling. The advantages of online surveys such gaining access to a distant study population, and greater speed of response (Roztocki, 2001) have been utilized and supported the decision for it in the first place despite of the fact here are, however, a number of minor disadvantages, including the difficulty of determining or influencing the response rate (Fricker, et al., 2005). The questionnaire contained 32 questions, two of them giving room for comments or free texts. For the technical administration of the inquiry the services of SurveyMonkey® were used. Most of the answers could be given on the basis of multiple choice on a five point Likert scale. Analysis of the respondents’ answers revealed emerging patterns and a sense of general direction rather than learning about phenomena in a detailed manner. Correlations in the data not only offer novel and invaluable insights, but confirm substantial findings even on the basis of a small set of data. Thus a small sample has been evaluated whose precision has been improved by randomness. It

has been used to find out whether the results support the theories laid down in the literature. An overview of the complete results is given in Annex 1; thus the analysis in this chapter is restricted to the most significant findings. From this survey, it is evident now that the branding orientation of universities is above the mean on the Likert scale, since the majority of questions (Q) reached a weighted average above 3.0.

The aim of questions 1 and 2 was to determine the status of the respondents. The total number of responses was 154, while 44 of them did not qualify to proceed and answer further questions, since they either did not belong to a higher education institution or did not give tacit consent to the inquiry. The majority of respondents were students (61%), while the rest consisted of university teachers (28%), researchers (12%), university leaders (7%) and administrators (6%). This set-up actually resembles the composition of a small research university. Balancing data gathered from influencers and decision makers is key to getting an accurate picture of an institution. Often data gathered by surveys includes an inappropriate representation of respondents who have no or hardly any influence over strategic decisions. That means that drawing linkages with theoretical concepts will be difficult, if not impossible.

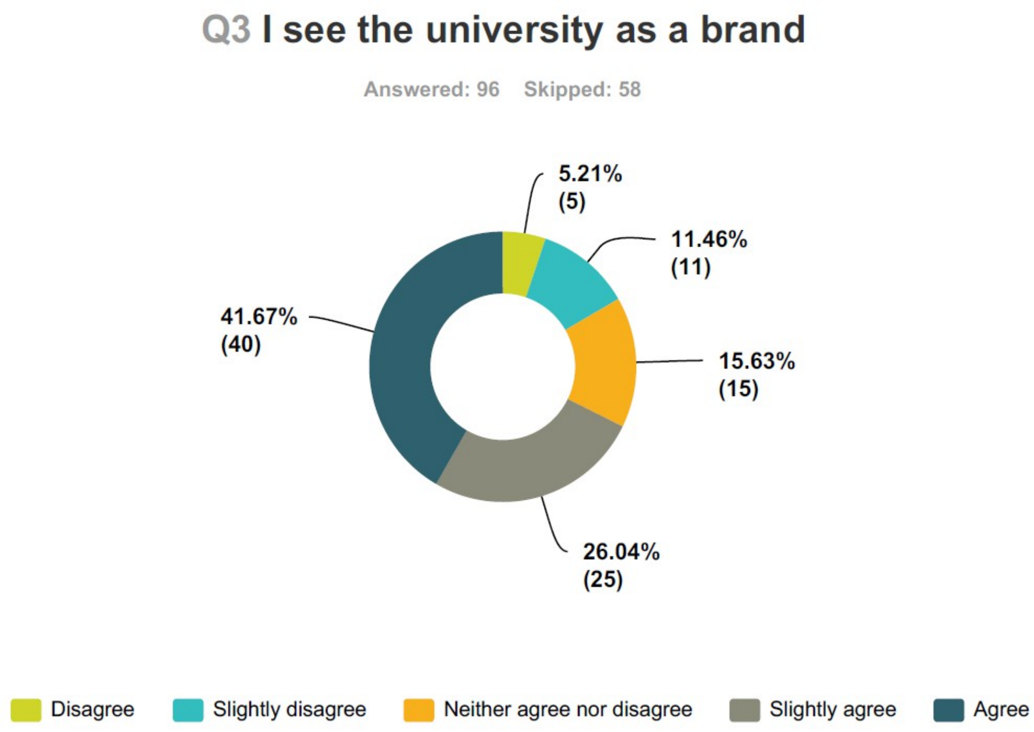


*Figure 3: Responses to question 3 (Q3)*

It is apparent from Figure 3 that the majority of respondents agree fully, or slightly that a university can be a brand. Thus the weighted average for the responses of Q 3 is 3.88 (out of 5).

The data resulting from question 4 indicates that there exists significant participatory experience in brand building processes among the respondents (22% agree, 16% slightly agree). A dominant response - and thus strong evidence of agreement - was also found in the replies to Q5, confirming that higher education institutions had developed a brand narrative expressing what they want to be known for (WA 3.50) - and even more so concerning a mission statement (Q 17), which reached a weighted average of 3.84, while the value for museums according to Baumgarth (2009) had been as low as 2.06.

Further, there is a fairly good match between the visitor clubs of museums and alumni clubs of universities. Baumgarth (2009, p. 41) confirms that two thirds of museums had such a club, while in the HEI inquiry one third of the respondents agree and 40.86% slightly agree to the respective statement (Q 27). The comparison of the two types of institutions reveals also that the adherence to brand design guidelines is much higher with employees of museums (WA 3.29) than those of higher education institutions (WA 2.83).

From this survey, it is now evident that only a fairly small number of higher education institutions have developed a brand narrative (21%) or made considerable investments in their brands (22%). In the majority of cases, brand decisions are taken at the top leadership level only.

Thirty seven per cent strongly confirm that the higher education institution uses a detailed mission statement (Q17), which they find is also communicated quite well via the website (Q8). The majority of respondents disagree with the fact that the brand of their institution is being continuously reviewed and further developed in rebranding workshops, which can be taken as an indicator of an internal striving for consistency of the brand image. There were a number of questions linked to the issue of brand positioning (Q 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 22, and 26). While there is much approval of efforts to improve the position (WA 3.49), in particular with regard to league tables (WA 3.51), respondents reported that there seems to be hardly any manifestation of the current position. Neither the exterior of the campus, nor its interior design is considered as representing a convincing reflection of the brand position by more than 10% of the respondents. The same refutation also applies to recruitment activities, as apparently vacancy notices do not usually refer to the brand of the institution, nor its status (WA 2.87). The only exception appears to be in connection with special events (WA 3.29), which here seem to be more frequently used for positioning the HEI brand among stakeholders than in museums (WA 2.33).

As evidenced through this study, around 40% of the respondents know about a rebranding effort of their institution involving the brand name (Q30). This has also been backed up by two revealing qualitative remarks:

- “The branding activities were more prominent when rebranding was undertaken; now we are in steady state.”
- “When we went through a name change (from college to university) then there was much more attention given to the brand. Likewise, when another HEI that is geographically close by changed its name, we trademarked multiple names that were similar to ours.”

About one third of the respondents acknowledged the fact that their institution participates in rankings (Q 25). It is obvious, also, from the results of this survey, that the outcome of rankings influences brand awareness and vice versa. Taking the replies from Q 6, one encounters the usual suspects that form the top of league tables: Harvard (28), MIT (11), Yale (7), Oxford (7), Princeton (5), Cambridge (3), Ivy League Universities (3) and last, but not least Liverpool (3). The remainder consisted of single references to individual institutions that most likely were the HEIs that the respondents came from. In addition, reference has been made to merchandise associated with a university, such as their own clothing brands.

An important issue emerging from these findings is the fact that over one third of respondents are not sure if the brand and profile of their institution is different from the brands and profiles of others (Q 16). Only one fifth (21.51%) agree with their distinctiveness. Nor does there seem to be a pressing need for comparison, because 92% of the respondents are to some degree likely to recommend their institution to someone they know (Q 7).Those who have participated in branding activities of the institution (Q4) are even more likely to recommend and thus promote the aims of it (Q7).

Results

| Q 4 / Q 7 | Disagree | Slightly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly agree | Agree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q7: Extremely likely (A) | 26.67% 8 | 6.67% 2 | 6.67% 2 | 23.33% 7 | 36.67% 11 | 30.61% 30 |
| Q7: Very likely (B) | 20.69% 6 | 27.59% 8 | 20.69% 6 | 13.79% 4 | 17.24% 5 | 29.59% 29 |
| Q7: Moderately likely (C) | 29.63% 8 | 14.81% 4 | 29.63% 8 | 14.81% 4 | 11.11% 3 | 27.55% 27 |
| Q7: Slightly likely (D) | 20.00% 1 | 40.00% 2 | 20.00% 1 | 20.00% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 5.10% 5 |
| Q7: Not at all likely (E) | 42.86% 3 | 14.29% 1 | 14.29% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 28.57% 2 | 7.14% 7 |

*Figure 4: Correlation between active participation (Q4) and intended promotion (Q7)*

Wiley and Kraut (1996) have described how surveys can measure customer satisfaction and consequently business performance by using so-called 'net promoter scores'. Such scores are based on the likelihood that respondents would refer an institution to others. It is visualized by using a Likert scale giving the number of respondents who are promoters and subtracting the number of declared detractors, based on their response to a question such as Q 7 of the brand orientation survey described above. It is thus a reliable indicator for sustainable growth, achieved through active referrals, as well as the opposite caused by the effects of neutral or negative actions such as warning prospective clients. Thus marketing departments need net promoter data to monitor the sustainability of the brand. As described below, clients can acts as promoters, passive customers or detractors.

Depending upon the ratings, decision-makers can identify the percentage of clients ready to promote the enterprise, and use this number to establish a nexus to performance over time. The literature reviewed (Reichheld and Markey, 2011) also suggested that a nexus between the likelihood of recommendation and the economic success of an institution may exist due to the focus on client loyalty beyond reason. Their book with the title 'The Ultimate Question (2011) is a quarry of case studies which document the efficiency of net promoter surveys. According to Reichheld and Markey (2011), effective net promoter systems are key components of any type of brand management.

Although other factors can certainly influence a higher education institution's brand orientation, universities are starting to take into account the degree of loyalty displayed by their members and their eagerness to recommend them to others. By including this indicator in their surveys, universities can confirm the appropriateness of the net promoter metric in their own specific environment. In other words, net promoter scores can be considered as one of the most essential metrics for student and staff recruitment as well as for improvement of the overall reputation.

As regards the further comments in the free text area (Q 32), a handful of useful contributions were made. One of them stated the obvious, but inevitable fact: “Most students wouldn't really know about the ‘brand’ of their HEI”. This statement is further backed up by the high percentage of respondents that chose to “neither agree nor disagree”, either due to a feeling of insecurity or ignorance. This has been most likely the case with questions 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 31. Another aspect highlighted is the seeming novelty of the branding issue, as expressed in the remark “…we are just working on branding. The institution is over a hundred years old and this has never been done”. This kind of positioning statement is taken further by one commentator who remarks: “The need for branding could be better explained to academics”.

Some findings in the present study were also consistent with the findings of Schmidt and Baumgarth (2014) with regard to social entrepreneurship organizations (SEO). Similar to higher education institutions (HEI), SEOs can be categorized as either ‘mission-driven’ or ‘profit-driven’ organizations. There is further resemblance with regard to branding:

> “From a behavioural perspective, brand orientation characteristics include the importance accorded to the internal anchorage of the brand identity (mission, vision, and values). The idea of ‘living the brand’ has a strong link to the brand orientation concept” (Schmidt and Baumgarth, 2014, p.40).

There are a number of similarities in the conceptual model between the present study of HEIs and that described by Schmidt and Baumgarth (2014). Their suggested framework builds on the idea that market, brand and entrepreneurial orientation are based on the same structure, with separate specifications for the different cultural and behavioural aspects.

As a matter of fact, the survey results support Baumgarth’s (2009) stance who considers brand orientation as a specific variant of marketing orientation, characterized by the importance accorded to the brand in all management decisions. While “the idea of market orientation is that organisations should focus on the interaction with customers and then look inward to explore how that customer knowledge can be used to build organisation-wide responses” (Ind and Bjerke, 2007, p.136), the idea of brand orientation is - according to Urde et al. (2011, p.15) - “an approach in which the process of the organization revolves around the creation, development, and protection of brand identity”.

According to Baumgarth (2009, p.36) “approximately 24% of market performance and 14% of cultural performance support the relevance of brand orientation to the success of museums”. It can be assumed that for higher education institutions there exists a similar ratio between market performance and scientific performance. The THE World University Rankings, however, take a much lower rate as indicator for the market performance, i.e. industry income from innovation worth only 2.5 % of the complete income.

Thus the current survey’s results are consistent and in good agreement with past research studies, both conceptual (e.g., Stensaker and D´Andrea, 2007) and empirical (e.g., Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009). Nevertheless, the results show clearly that the self-reported level of brand orientation could be much higher for the academic community. The most likely explanation for this lacklustre result is likely the current lack of models and methods for HE branding. Creating more awareness for the existing tools seems to be another matter of urgency if universities want to remain competitive. These emerging themes, while preliminary in some institutions, suggest that the research presented in this study is a most topical one. Drawing on published research into brand

management and experiential psychology, it proposes a new qualitative model of brand orientation. Here again the key seems to be the employees as other study results suggest:

> “It is evident from the results of this study that employee access to brand-related information, in addition to the more traditional forms of internally generated organisational information, resulted in a strong allegiance to the organisation” (King and Grace, 2008, p.370).

Although there are several competing explanations for the results, most findings, however, have implications for the suggestions for practice provided in the final chapter.

# 6 Conceptual framework

Miles and Huberman (1994, p.18) defined a conceptual framework as the part of the research project, that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them".

Furthermore it should fulfil what Baumgarth (2009, p.43) suggests for further research: "It might also examine a range of tools, instruments and initiatives available for deployment in the quest for improved brand orientation, whether in museums or more generally". In recent years he provided more definite guidance as to such a framework when he was asked to become the editor of a special issue on the matter:

> "Neither the perceived importance of brands nor the interest in brand management shows any sign of diminishing among practitioners or academics. In principle, we think that brand-orientation research could be focused on: (1) the paradigm, mind-sets, approaches, and drivers; (2) leadership and management of brands; and (3) performance, measurement, and implementation" (Baumgarth, Merrilees and Urde, 2013, p.976).

## *6.1 Terminological foundations*

The basis of any type of terminology work is a conceptual analysis of the subject field concerned:

> "Conceptual analysis is construed as revealing: . . . an illuminating set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the (correct) application of a concept, where an illuminating set is roughly one which brings out the content or the structure of the concept in such a way as to clarify the concept and indicate its relation to at least some other concepts" (Audi, 1983, p.90).

The characteristics of most definitions of the concept of "brand" are deduced from the fact that a brand does not only act as a signpost or reference point in fast changing markets, but primarily exists inside a client's head clustering values and attributes that build up trust and thus support decisions of purchase and consumption. In this way the brand can both provide a basis for selection and give a sense of association. Brands pretend a kind of stability and consistency which is not necessarily granted, because they are also subject to fads and fashions. A brand is only a representation of reality, determined by a subject, never reality itself. In other words one could say: "A brand is something that exists in a recognizable way – and that says 'you have found what you are looking for'." (Braun, 2004, p.176f). According to Temple (2006, p.16) "the brand emerges as a function of

how well the institution performs in meeting the needs of its clients: it is the result of effective marketing and consequential changes in activities, rather than its basis". A widely accepted definition of brand, however, can only be expected from standardization activities at the international level. At the beginning of 2014 the ISO Technical Committee 289 "Brand Evaluation" has been founded. Its scope is the preparation of standards, explaining the terminology of branding, the methods and the guidelines of brand development, including brand evaluation. It will draw upon the expertise of eight participating countries, among them both Austria and the United Kingdom, as well as those of 24 observing countries.

A brand is also a product of creativity and strategic thinking, in particular if it has been developed in a higher education environment: "As in so many commercial brands, the university brand is a mix of product, communication, behaviour and environment. Product, of course, is key. High levels of teaching and research, and a good sprinkling of Nobel Prize winners, are a prerequisite for a world-class institution of higher education and research" (Olins, 2003, p.245). According to Brown (1995) postmodernist views challenge the traditional definitions of branding but can pave the way for new approaches which were also of benefit to higher education institutions. The greatest challenge in this respect has been formulating a definition of the university brand that finds overall acceptance:

> "However, despite the fact that branding efforts in academia are easily observable for example, through the use of vision statements, visual designs, and core values, there is a striking paucity of research on branding in higher education...We believe such a focus should be explored more in detail, particularly with respect to the challenges of defining the 'university brand''' (Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009, p.450).

There have always been numerous synonyms in use for the concept, the most popular being 'hallmark' (Temple, 2014), 'image' (Symes, 1996) or even 'identity', as we can learn from the following quotation: "Once, in a university president's office, Ms. Scarborough referred to students as 'customers'. 'That was it. He showed me out', she says. Now, instead of discussing a school's 'brand', she calls it an 'identity'" (Glazer and Korn, 2012, p.B10). The question whether students are to be considered as customers seems to be still under discussion, although it is a prerequisite for the brand orientation of any university: "It puts administrators in a bind. On the one hand, they are generally dedicated to making their institutions more customer-oriented, while on the other hand, by doing so they contribute to grade inflation and the lowering of academic standards" (Hubbell, 2015, p.83).

### *6.2 Positioning the university*

In branding literature one can come across two different definitions of "positioning"; one refers to the procedures that determine how an organisation is situated relative to its competitors; the other relates to the way in which products and services are situated in the minds of clients and target stakeholders. Each university has to position its brand amongst the other brands of the higher education market by following a specific strategy. The most common practice in this respect is to formulate and publicize a positioning statement which elucidates some of the essential features of the brand. As a rule, the brand positioning statement should have the following key elements: a definition of the target market, the brand promise pointing out the major emotional benefit and last but not least the reason for believing the brand promise. In other words: in a brand positioning statement, the brand benefit is to be the essence. In addition, a client value proposition can serve as a further useful tool for verifying the promised benefits. Unlike a unique selling proposition for a brand, the positioning statement does not focus on a rational point of difference but seeks to be emotionally unique. It tries to direct the clients' perception from functional to psychological benefits. In most cases it is a narrative statement on how the institution meets a certain core human need in a way that no other institution could do so. Thus the underlying core human emotion within the story acts as a driver for making decisions in favour of the institution.

These procedures are also applicable to the higher education setting as confirmed by the following quotation:

> "In particular, all institutions in higher education will be going through major processes of change, creating new policies, working practices and other procedures, aimed at being leaner, slimmer and more agile. What came from our discussions was a 'distinctiveness' based upon the values by which staff were treated, a sensitivity of handling change and an approach that, whilst having a conventional set of HR policies and procedures, paid much regard to these values in the implementation of those policies". (Wooldridge and Newcomb, 2011, p.17)

A number of consultants offer professional assistance to higher education institutions when meeting this challenge. The Illuminate Consulting Group (ICG) is for instance one of the few enterprises (see http://www.illuminateconsultinggroup.biz/institutional_positioning.php) that have acquired ample expertise on positioning academic institutions and education systems, among others the King's College London.

As can been seen in the latter case, the reward has been worth the effort:

> "King's College London and New York University are the most significant climbers over the survey period from 2010 to 2014, dramatically improving their relative positions in the top 50 universities in the surveys, which Thomson Reuters says includes the insights of 65,000 academics and is representative of 6,500 universities and 105 areas of study" (Jobbins, 2015)

Their efforts accomplished more for higher education than the respective ministers would have expected:

> "Every institution should assess its brand and reputation and how people internally and externally perceive it from time to time. Our peers, including UCL, Imperial and the LSE have all undertaken comprehensive work on the positioning of their brand and their identity over recent years to ensure that their vision, values and excellence are clear to all" (Byrne, 2015).

Education hubs stand for the latest development in positioning higher education alliances in a number of countries, such as the UAE, Qatar, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Botswana. As a consequence of the increase in worldwide competitiveness, education hubs are certainly more than a branding exercise, but a matter of regional status and national development (Knight, 2011). The first systematic study on the new development of International Education Hubs (Knight, 2014) has been completed recently and provides evidence and analytic insights which support the emergence of three types of international education hubs in the higher education landscape:

- student-centred
- talent-oriented and
- knowledge or innovation based.

All of them use the internet for their online positioning of the brand, an activity which should be carried out with the necessary caution: "It should be noted, however, that online brand positioning should ultimately be largely consistent with the reality of the brand experience of students attending the institution, if a long term credible brand is to be maintained" (Chapleo et al., 2011, p.41). As a matter of fact, Lee (2014) noted that the comparison of the ambitions of talent development with the levels of implementation in several education hubs revealed considerable deficiencies.

Zenger (2013) talks about the 'uniqueness challenge' of positioning attempts, because they have to be based on strategies that are both high in quality and easy to assess. A strategy that is easily evaluated, however, is at the same time easily replicated thereby, quickly undermining its value of distinctiveness. Another aspect is pointed out in the following statement which refers to the

necessity of keeping an eye on the actions of competitors or - as Ries and Ries (1999) put it - that knowing your competitor's positioning is just as essential as knowing your own:

> "Many companies have a dedicated competitive intelligence team, a group of people whose role is to study competitors, sort out what they are doing, and then brief the business managers. Some companies even have a dedicated team in each market, for example, one team in Brazil and another team in Japan" (Calkins, 2012, p.82).

In order to increase the competitiveness of a university, it is important to put together a unique set of distinctive characteristics. This can usually be achieved by a reflective process that provides answers to a number of basic questions as they are listed in the following example:

> "Although I hate much of the jargon of branding – "positioning", "differentiation", "USP" – I believe that the discipline of branding is a good thing for any organisation. It's a good thing because trying to build a brand forces you to answer some fundamental "why" questions. Why should I apply to your university? Why should I work for you? Why should I fund your research? Why should I care? Why should you exist? Branding at its best is radical – it goes to the roots, and it creates change" (Jones, 2013, p.39).

It is not realistic, however, that every university can become unique, because higher education institutions have too much in common, not only from a regional, but also from a global perspective. Therefore, it is more feasible that each university will identify its strong features and attempt to contribute to the diversity of the higher education market. Nevertheless, the higher education market is filled with universities which practice a kind of 'me too' marketing by offering exactly what their competitors are offering. Sataøen (2015, p.714) talks about a "tension between similarity and differentiation, which is important in the university sector". The similarity of the values pertaining to a university and the nation that it represents seems to be of relevance to institutions situated in Nordic countries, but the majority of higher education institutions feel that they fulfil an international mission and subscribe for instance to values of the Western culture in general.

Sustainable branding does not foster standardisation and uniformity, but individuality and originality. Inglis (2013, p.37) illustrates with a quotation from an email addressed to the staff of Kings College Cambridge about how this approach is put into practice:

> "As part of our review of King's Reputation and Identity, we've been thinking about who we are, what we stand for and what makes us special. Through an extensive process of consultation…we are forming a clear view of what makes us unique amongst universities. The next step in this process is to spread the word…we are building a team of King's Advocates to

> raise awareness of where King’s is going and the importance of building a reputation that aids that journey. We hope that you will consider becoming part of this team….you will also get to meet other like-minded members of the College community and have a bit of fun along the way!”.

Gill (2013, p.5) reports that “one leading private institution in India, Amity University, is already advertising on the helmets of cricket stars, associating its brand with those who have made it to the top of the most aspirational field of all in this cricket-mad country. Explaining the thinking behind the campaign, Amity’s chancellor says: 'In education, it is all about feeling pride…and people around you feeling proud of where you are.' “.

The University of Northampton, for instance, has a unique point of differentiation based around a social enterprise strategy. As a rule, public engagement is the predominant lever that universities use but the following challenge remains in most cases: “The issue is how we ‘husband it’ so that it builds reputation and brand and allows us to differentiate ourselves” (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2010, p.22).

Further advice as to the idiosyncratic nature of the sector can be found in a volume on higher education branding that has been published by EAIR - The European Higher Education Society in its Monograph Series on “Research, Policy and Practice in Higher Education”:

> “Even if branding is about positioning oneself in the emerging marketplace, the products and services that are branded are inherently cultural in their essence, and understanding how economic and cultural aspects of higher education are balanced or blurred during branding processes are an important area for analysis” (Stensaker & D'Andrea, 2007, p.7).

There are a number of external tools available to universities which could assist them in their positioning efforts. One company, for instance, tries to ensure that their client's positioning transforms from static content to continuous storytelling, experienced through social conversations without direct personal contact but a mix of digital marketing tools.

### *6.3 Defining institutional profile*

Every successful brand is based on a distinctive profile that differentiates it from others and makes it unique, so that other steps and activities can be built on such a foundation. Only when a brand’s profile has been defined and thoroughly tested can it be managed as an institutional asset and function as a solid referential framework which can prevent important decisions from being made without taking into account the respective brand. The lack of a clear profile could also lead to a gradual deterioration and devaluation of the brand: “In a marketplace where university brands face

the threat of being devalued with increased competition and reduced financial resources, success lies in their ability to differentiate their offerings and build or maintain a strong brand image" (Harvest, 2003, p.2).

In most industrialized countries, such as Austria, universities are obliged to sharpen their profiles and to develop a number of distinctive features as a result of the financial stringencies imposed upon the public higher education sector. The University of Vienna took quite a simple approach in this respect by advertising its foundation year of 1365, which is of course distinct from other universities in Europe. Nevertheless it proved to be quite successful as it won an advertising competition in 2012 with its slogan "New since 1365" pointing out the innovative nature of a higher education institution.

Yung (2012) reports that the higher education sector of Singapore no longer attempts to compete with the rest of the world by simply following Western models, which leads to the production of more "carbon copy" graduates. This decision was based on an expert advice to the government to set as a strategic policy the requirement that higher education institutions are to offer a 'unique value proposition'.

If the majority of the branding staff at a university is recruited from its own alumni, mainly experience from within the sector and relatively little from more marketing-orientated enterprises will be available for the development of a university brand. Thus it seems advisable that universities will try to recruit from outside the higher education sector, to access a more diverse skill base, take on learnings from other markets and try to move their branding on to a more professional level. But branding activities should never be the sole responsibility of the marketing department. Developing strategies and processes on distinctiveness of universities are a vital part of contemporary leadership in higher education. "The job of marketing the university or college proposition to a high profile mover and shaker from the commercial or business sector can, in itself, be an uphill struggle" (Stamp, 2006, p.2).

A brand's orientation has to follow the logic of the roadmap for the future success of an institution. In chapter 8 of his book 'How brands grow', Byron Sharp (2010) claims that distinctiveness is the next important step for a brand after differentiation. How this claim is implemented in practice is described in the following example:

> "The distinction may be in subject or theme, or it may be in style or approach – as we've seen, the quality of mentorship, the nature of the student experience and the relationship of a university to its city or region are all areas rich in potential, as are global partnerships and opportunities to study abroad. The Higher School of Economics in Moscow, for example,

> offers some joint degrees with the London School of Economics, thus making itself distinct in the search for top Russian talent" (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi, 2013, p.50)

According to Williams & Filippakou (2009) the distinctiveness of higher education institutions can be determined by their varying degree of elite formation, depending upon their position in a group of elite institutions including universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. A correlation between reputation ranking and distinctiveness seems to be obvious according to their study. The difference in age and academic heritage may also have a bearing on how easily institutions can reach the desired distinctiveness. Meeting the challenge of owning distinctiveness as a university is certainly not easy but the process can be supported by the growing tool-kit of resources that various projects are developing and, last but not least, by the insights that one can gain from a theory of branding.

A good example for a leading project of this sort is GuildHE (http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/). The aim of GuildHE is to provide its members collective endeavour, mutual aid and a shared vision. The motto "Distinction Diversity" has been chosen to hint at the distinctive contribution made by its members to higher education in Great Britain. The key objective is to build and manage a brand which stands for a sense of common purpose, mutual support and shared commitment to excellence. The concept of a "guild" is used to signal attributes such as quality, professionalism, heritage and standards maintenance. The letters "HE" as the second part of the brand name also reflect the fact that the membership base has diversified and GuildHE is open to any higher education institutions with degree awarding privileges.

Peter Coaldrake and Lawrence Stedman (2013) of Queensland University of Technology discuss a number of the advocated solutions, or what they term "policy myths". Separating research from teaching undermines the distinctiveness of universities as teaching "unsettled knowledge". Formal differentiation of institutions into world class universities and others risks making universities less rather than more socially responsive.

A good balance of teaching and research is also part and parcel of the student experience which universities should strive to convert into a brand experience by focusing upon some of the following dimensions:

> "Now, organisational brands must articulate, as standard, the specifics of what the student experience means at their institution and the benefits that accrue. Of course, student experience itself is a constantly changing concept. It is, currently, reported in a more "three dimensional" way than it has ever been before: encompassing social experience, diversity of the student body, programme structure and T and L pedagogy, for example" (Stamp, 2008, p.1).

The same procedures apply when trying to achieve a differentiation on the basis of the various academic disciplines which have all their specific brand culture, as has been pointed out by Woodhouse (2013): "Recognising disciplines as another form of branding allows us perhaps to reflect on the ways in which we view the world through our own disciplines. It might also allow us to think again about how we project disciplines to the world outside academia." As a matter of fact it is the mix of disciplines that makes some universities unique, in particular if they are all kept at a level of outstanding quality. Drori (2013, p.5) emphasizes the suitability of excellence as a promotional tool: "In this way, the university was transformed into a 'promotional university'. And promotion and marketing change the tone, if not the core, of academic work: from a branding perspective, excellence is a differentiation strategy rather than solely a professional duty".

### *6.4 Developing vision and mission statements*

A vision provides a brand with a *raison d'être* in the form of an audacious statement of the aspirations of the brand owner, while the mission determines specific strategic objectives that ensure that the vision can be accomplished. A mission statement has to be also a new and powerful brand proposition. Mission statements tend to be results of collective writing exercises which reflect an attempt to describe the universities' objectives. Unfortunately, they tend to be rather either overly internally focused by expressing to itself what the university does, rather than a highlighting of the benefits that are provided to external stakeholders; or alternatively they over-emphasize targets: "Mission documents are littered with aspirational references to be in the top 100 this or top 10 that…" (Baty, 2012). The ambitions of universities with regard to ranking results are very similar and cause a kind of uniformity which is counterproductive. Sauntson and Morrish (2010) also point out the lack of diversity in mission statements, which seem to them "to be an indefinable kind of 'branding' in which concrete purposes and achievements are replaced by a symbolic avowal of the values of business and industry" (p.83).

While it is an assumption that the search for a unique brand proposition in a mission statement may be the major concern of prospective students, pertinent research has indicated the opposite. In a study (Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009) that investigated the promises insinuated by a university brand, mission statements were not always considered as important from the point of view of applicants. In the current literature there is ample discussion about the need for a diversity of institutional missions with various meanings attaching. For some authors, diversity means hierarchical stratification between elite and mass universities, while others speak of horizontally differentiated universities. In many instances developing diversity and/or distinctiveness is a response to the downsizing and/or expansion of a university profile. Purdue University, for instance, had to meet the challenge "to connect the messages of Purdue's 13 colleges, spread the impact of

the institution and its alumni, and highlight its science, technology, engineering and math disciplines" (Glazer and Korn, 2012, B10).

On the one hand competition, prestige, and reputation measured by league tables of ranking schemes drive a singular concept of excellence which pushes towards uniformity; on the other hand diversity is certainly also the most valuable basis for excellence and for providing sustainable competitive advantage. There is a danger that this greater uniformity of mission will result in a "race to the middle" with universities occupying positions within a crowded market space, a space described by Kim and Mauborgne (2005) as a "red ocean". In contrast, "blue oceans" would represent new and emerging distinctive market spaces in which demand is created rather than shared with other universities. Sometimes the reputation of the institution is used as part of the mission statement in a way as the following example shows: "Cranfield University has a global reputation for inspirational teaching and research, industrial-scale facilities and superior links with industry and commerce" (retrieved from: http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/about/page1357.html ). When investigating the things that the Arts University Bournemouth had been known for, the institution's 'maker culture' has been identified, that is the idea that this institution is defined through the act of making. This effort to distil an identity that lends itself to creating a distinct brand image resulted in attracting students with an aspiring and creative talent.

The University of Surrey at Guildford created a revised brand in 2013 and tried to avoid strap-lines and jargon in its new mission statement. Instead, it attempted to express an honest desire to provide its students with an advantage in achieving their ambitions. Furthermore, it promises to give its students a competitive edge through a complete education consisting of a unique blend of knowledge, skills and experience. Before that, in 2009, the logo has also been redesigned in a way to reflect both the university's strong heritage and its confidence for the future. In order to visualize this attitude, the image of a stag has been incorporated as a symbolic representation of the foremost qualities of the institution: boldness, independence and ambition. (cf.:http://www.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/press/2009/3097_hrh_the_duke_of_kent_kg_unveils_surrey_stag.htm). Other universities used as a tool of visualization not only the logo but also the brand name (see below). Eckhardt et al. (2015, p.813) point towards the fact that inconspicuousness is the current trend in logo design: "Inconspicuous brands are by definition subtle and are often 'refined' in terms of the way they are designed and their aesthetics. Conspicuous brands utilise 'loud' brand signals, and achieve this via large, bright logos or other overt brand aesthetics".

Bradley (2013) concocted a list of deceiving marketing claims as part of mission statements and other promotional material of universities, categorized according to the following nine types:

> "omission of facts and selective reporting; misleading wording; misleading inferences about an attribute; misleading associations between attributes; misleading endorsements; claim-fact discrepancies; falsehoods; carefully crafted comparisons, and claims without a reference point...Publications emanating from a university, including the prospectus, carry with them a public expectation that the claims they make are carefully presented, well evidenced and reputable" (Bradley, 2013, p.85).

Mission groups are a major instrument to evoke diversity in the higher education sector by encouraging collaboration and stimulating debate. The Russell Group would be a typical example of how a mission group can gain strength and create a powerful voice to propagate a common aim. Yet for some universities, being aligned brings with it greater risks of marginalising their own interests for the benefit of the established group. Thus a number of institutions such as Keele University choose to refrain from this alignment.

Leonard (2014) warns that mission statements encourage 'mission creep' as seems to be the case with many American universities:

> "The term mission creep originally emerged within a military context. It describes an extension of the unit's mission outside of its intended scope. The term was extended to US community colleges pursuing authorisation to offer baccalaureate degrees in the nineties. It can be appropriately applied to the majority of the nation's public and non-profit tertiary institutions currently facing financial challenges. I suggest that manifestations of mission creep have been clear in the nation's institutions for decades".

Montague (2013) shows why "storydoing" enterprises are more successful than "storytelling" ones, because their services are perceived as authentic if the story is supported by impressive action, and not only communicated in the form of advertising. Translating this message to universities means that they have to see how they can get a lasting impact on the history of science and scholarship and actively fulfil their mission and not only talk about it in statements. Already before the turn of the last century, Symes (1996, p. 137) observed

> "a growth in university advertising in a wide variety of contexts, in newspapers and on television, in cinemas and in many public places, on billboards and even buses! The character of this advertising is slick and professional, is often prepared by advertising agencies, and is designed to create an unambiguous image profile of a particular university, to create, as it were, a brand name for its educational approach".

The brand name is in many instances a key to success and thus has to be (re)considered carefully. The recent rebranding of King's College London to simply King's London seemed necessary, because the original name was lead to considerable ambiguity: was it a residential college, was it an academic college as known from Cambridge and Oxford, or was it some type of further education college? The name-change followed consultation with staff, student and alumni over 18 months and caused expenses of an estimated sum of £300,000.  Its principal, Ed Byrne, gave as a reason for the rebrand the fact “that the way we currently present ourselves sometimes underemphasises the great university that King’s is” (Byrne, 2015). Both students and alumni of this higher education institution launched a series of protests after the administration announced on 16 December 2014 that it would change its name to “King’s London” by February 2015. On the basis of a petition which had been signed by 12,000 people, the plans to rebrand the university as ‘King’s London’ had to be dropped for good.

More success has been granted to a Japanese university near Osaka, formally known as Kinki University, which performed a rebranding action to stop English-speaking students from ridiculing its connotations. Thus on 20 May, 2014, the English version of the name of the university was officially changed to "Kindai University" (http://www.kindai.ac.jp/english/news/news/aim-for-more-international-universitynew-faculty-english-namesourcethe-japan-times.html). Rebranding a university by a simple name change has always been a delicate business. Newcastle University for instance made quite a few headlines when it registered the trademark “Central University of Newcastle upon Tyne”, which resulted in a rude acronym. Therefore the university also registered an alternative trademark named “Research University of Newcastle upon Tyne”, abbreviated as “RUNT” (http://www.cityam.com/blog/1381143546/newcastle-uni-brands-students-runts).

### *6.5 Brand equity and value*

The value of data that an organisation holds as well as the equity of a brand form a new asset class in most accounting systems: “In the twentieth century, value shifted from physical infrastructure like land and factories to intangibles such as brands and intellectual property” (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, 2013, p.15f.). Intangible assets are usually valued by deducting the market value of a company from its book value. Not-for-profit organisations, however, need a more sophisticated method for determining their corporate worth. Universities have to be aware of this when they plan their branding strategies.

From the investor's point of view, the brand equity provides a reliable indicator of the current financial health of an enterprise; in the higher education environment this would be the view of the traditional funding body of a university, be it public or private. Its functions and sustainability as an asset have been described by a number of studies. Simon and Sullivan (1993) as well as Cobb-

Walgren (1995) provide ample evidence in their research for the considerable impact of leading brands on the value, revenues and profits of enterprises. For the last twenty years, the relevance of intangible resources has become more and more acknowledged despite of the difficulties that accountants had with them as elucidated by the following situation:

> "In some countries, intangible investments are larger than tangible investments – for example, in the UK, the US, and also within the Eurozone, in Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland and the Netherlands. The broad category of intangible investment that includes brand equity, namely economic competencies, is the largest component of intangible investment for Eurozone area countries, the UK and the US" (WIPO, 2013, p.29).

The value of intangibles remained usually hidden, because they are neither embodied physically in infrastructure such as machinery or buildings, nor financially in shares of the stock market. They comprise, besides brands, new knowledge stemming from research and development activities, and know-how relating to business organisation. In some instances they add more to the competitive advantage of enterprises than tangible assets (Lev and Daum, 2004).

There is a growing number of university leaders who are convinced that a clearer reflection of intangibles is necessary in official reports in order to secure their visibility to stakeholders who can be as critical as shareholders in industry, particularly if they represent funding bodies. For instance, the new education white paper of South Africa includes an eqity index as well as a six-year enrolment plan, a comprehensive equity-weighted funding framework for research activities, graduate throughput rates, and staff and student retention figures (SAPA, 2013). In this example one could talk about a typical entrepreneurial university, even if this would never mean the full adoption of values and methods from the commercial world. A number of not-for-profit organisations have learned to appreciate the brand due to its pivotal role in attracting sponsors or other philanthropic benefactors. In this way it can also be labelled as:

> "Relationship capital – this includes all key external relationships that drive business, including customers, suppliers, partners, outsourcing and financing partners, to name a few. This kind of capital also includes organisational brand and reputation. Due to the growing importance of networks in organisational structures, this is also sometimes called 'network capital'" (Jarboe, 2013, p.75).

Registered brands are also considered to be part of the intellectual property owned by a person or legal entity. They are referred to as trademarks which can be acquired or sold according to their financial value. "Patents, trademarks, channel relationships, superior management and creative talent are brand assets that contribute to brand value, but since they are not derived from

consumers, they should not be considered a component of brand equity" (Raggio and Leone, 2007). The true value of a brand, however, lies in its capability of securing future earnings. Several economic research papers (Amico, 2012, etc.) have focused on this issue with the aim to establish the value of intangible assets for equity valuations.

There are a number of additional advantages of intangible assets for the competitiveness of the enterprise: "For instance, a firm's brand equity – its reputation or image – is built through flows of strategic expenditure and accumulated expertise. Because it is cumulative and path-dependent it is hard for rivals to replicate" (OECD, 2013, p.233). Williams and Omar (2014, p.2) point out that the higher education setting requires an even more sophisticated interpretation of these two concepts which makes an immediate translation of conclusions inappropriate: "Yet HEIs might interpret reputation and image differently than other service industries, in part since employees are instrumental in constructing the reputation of an HEI by giving it 'soul'."

There is a further aspect which can be of the highest relevance to universities and their faculties:

> "This means protecting the identity of clusters of researchers and teaching teams who have built a reputation and relationships around a specific discipline or domain, and ensuring that when reviewing structure consideration is given to preserving valuable engagement brands" (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2010, p.44).

The notion of engagement brands plays a pivotal role in various ranking schemes (see below) and forms the secret of success of a number of world-class universities.

### *6.5.1 Brand equity valuation*

Since the brand obviously belongs to the intangible assets of an institution, its value has to be defined by using specific methods. Brand valuation is an attempt to determine the value of the assets on an enterprise that can be attributed to brand equity. Brand equity resembles reputation with regard to the fact that it can neither be purchased nor inherited. The perfect management of brand equity requires sound data showing why the brand stands where it is and how it is perceived. Performance measurement and market metrics such as balanced scoreboards support the development of brand equity. Any comparison of a particular brand with other brands can be problematic, however, because certain leading brands might be too distinctive and have idiosyncrasies that cannot be easily replicated. Thus superficial similarities as used in advertising are not to be relied on for valuing brands. Furthermore, the brand equity is not always an adequate indicator for the effectiveness of branding activities, as has been pointed out by Chapleo (2011) for the higher education market. Metrics for several other intangible assets of companies, however, have been published by Corrado et al. (2006).

There are two major categories of brand valuation models: one would be research-based equity evaluations and the other would be more or less cost-based approaches. While the first models measure that have an impact on the economic performance of brands, such as the behaviour and attitudes of clients, the second define the value of the brand as the aggregation of all expenses incurred in developing the brand to its current state. Sinclair and Keller (2014, p.296), however, consider a third method to be superior to the others: “Estimating the future economic benefits a brand will generate for its owner through its user community – the income method or valuation approach – remains as the most appropriate and relevant method”. It goes without saying that this 'income method' is only feasible for universities which are primarily financed via student fees. In the commercial world, the so-called Net Promoter Score is used to make it comprehensible how satisfied clients are by asking them if they would recommend an organisation to other potential clients. Using these results, higher education institutions can identify – in the same way as enterprises – the percentage of students who would promote them, and use this data to predict their performance in the future and over time (Ittner and Larcker, 1998). The survey analysed in chapter 5 included such a statement that can produce a Net Promoter Score.

The role of brand equity in higher education rankings has been investigated by Lamb (2010) in a highly specialised study on this topic. He came to the following conclusion:

> “Referring to the employed model of brand equity ..., two of the dimensions potentially inform each other (perceived quality and brand associations with awareness), as perceptions of quality cannot occur without being aware of a brand, complete with affiliated associations. As such, variables that inform these two dimensions may be highly correlated” (Lamb, 2010, p.87).

Thus the ultimate aim of higher education institutions is to leverage brand equity by quality assurance and publicity in order to create brand value. This has also been confirmed by Pinar et al. (2014), who consider perceived quality to be the core brand equity dimension of universities. One proof of quality would be the success of graduates and the placement data of alumni. In order to create the required awareness, alumni could act as a kind of brand ambassadors and demonstrate their impact on society. In addition, their lifelong relationship adds social value as well as financial value to the university, particularly in the form of donations. Alumni and student testimony in university marketing materials can add more to the brand value than the merits of a renowned faculty member. Without them functioning as role models, prospective students would be left with media stereotypes and impersonal university brands. This has also been confirmed by the study mentioned above:

> "The third extracted component was alumni visibility. Alumni visibility was of interest in the context of perceived quality. Within the brand equity framework, it is noted that perceived quality can be a basis for a brand extension or for a price premium" (Lamb, 2010, p.85).

The aim of integrated alumni branding is to create a situation in which graduates become long-term associates who pass on the benefits of their university and its reputation to pertinent stakeholders such as prospective students and their parents. In other words, by referring a higher education programme to colleagues who are interested in advancing their education, the brand-guided graduate can make a positive impact on the future enrollments of the institution. Earning the necessary trust takes time and requires the appropriate attitude. Showing that the university is willing to put prospective and current students' needs first and its business needs second can render the expected success. If alumni are willing to act as brand ambassadors who are prepared to share a university's successes and recommend its faculty, they can be considered as the ideal positive brand message amplifiers. This works even more so, if the alumnus happens to be a celebrity.

In order to achieve authenticity and impact, universities need to approach celebrities and create meaningful ties with them, and selecting a well-known person, either living or dead as a brand-guardian can contribute to the perception of an authentic relationship. For instance, one of the very successful private universities in Austria named itself "Sigmund Freud Universität". This brand name adds to the other assets of the institution which can be described as such:

> "Today organizations succeed by marshalling the assets that have traditionally been considered as secondary, soft and hard to define – things like smart people, good processes, big data, unique designs, strong networks, engaged cultures and creative business models" (Jarboe, 2013, p.75).

### *6.5.2 Defining the financial value of brands*

Most authors (such as Raggio and Leone, 2007) define the financial value of a brand as the sale revenue or development cost of this particular brand. Selling a brand would require the existence of a market, as well as the establishment of market principles, a sphere which seems to be alien to most university leaders. Rider, Hasselberg, and Waluszewski (2013) claim that the very values that have made up European higher education and have secured its success hitherto are being eroded and replaced by commercial opportunism and economic expediency, as 'market principles' are forced on universities, inducing an unfamiliar culture of 'managerialism'. There is a difference, however, between 'being a business' and 'acting in a business like fashion'. Being a business is about the ways of maximising profits; acting in a business minded fashion is much wider and includes the achievement of efficiency in processes which encourage creativity. As a matter of fact, universities

have dedicated themselves traditionally to fostering research and education, focusing on long-term academic goals, comprising the development of scholarly disciplines mostly through blue sky research. This role of universities is gradually changing, as they are currently becoming more output oriented due to the increased pressures to justify their return on investment (e.g., international competition, reduced financial resources, quality assessment exercises, rankings, etc.). In addition there is a strong pressure from stakeholders trying to force universities into the valorisation of their research results: „Valorisation is therefore broader than 'commercialisation', motivated by commercial profit in the context of an increasingly marketised academy" (Benneworth & Jongbloed, 2009, p.568).

VanVught (2008, p.162) refers to the following fact: "The larger the influence of academic norms and values in a higher education organization, the lower the level of diversity of the higher education system". Therefore one can also conclude the opposite correlation, which means that an increased influence of economic norms, including branding leads to a higher diversification and distinctiveness. This fact is also confirmed by the following quotation by one of the leading market researchers of our times: "As markets reach into spheres of life traditionally governed by nonmarket norms, the notion that markets don't touch or taint the goods they exchange becomes increasingly implausible" (Sandel, 2012, p.114). Providing evidence with solid statistical data on how much universities are investing in branding and what the returns are with regard to the growth of their reputation, is not possible for the following reasons: by simply quantifying their advertising budgets, one cannot determine the complete input for a university's brand. Brands are reputational assets which partly depend on the excellence of the institution in all of its missions (Kashani et al., 2000). Furthermore, it is impossible to determine accurately the annual depreciation rates of investments into a brand. According to the latest report by WIPO, they could be used as indicators when predicting economic growth: "For policymakers, it is important to understand the ways in which branding activities interact with the broader economy. Branding investments affect consumer welfare and, in the long term, can influence the rate of economic growth" (WIPO, 2013, p.6).

### *6.5.3 The social value of brands*

Most corporate brand owners are more or less aware of the social relevance of their brands, when describing them in their business reports, but most investors still focus their value assessment on the data of their accounts. University brands are often evaluated by using the same indicators, which are applied to companies, such as their impact on the economic growth of a country (Stephan, 2012). These inadequate valuations ignore the role that universities play in building a stable and more competent society and in providing a brand experience to their students which can be considered a sort of emotional gain exceeding that which is provided for instance by the hospitality industry. One

possible interpretation of the current attitude towards values can be found in the article by Inglis (2013, p.36f.):

> "Would we learn the answers from a PhD passed (as you might say) at the University of Portsmouth on the topic of "identifying brand values"? No institution in this roll call of the websites is too grand or too self-confident not to genuflect before the mad marketeers. Or not until we flit across the border. Good old St Andrews, faithful to its Presbyterian heritage, will have none of it, not a glimmer of brand values."

Although existing data on the impact of science provides important signals to the higher education marketplace, they cannot do justice to outputs for which no market values exist, such as an improvement of chances for employment of graduates. As these outcomes are rather difficult to quantify, they are likely to be excluded from conventional analyses and evaluations, thus hiding the full value being created by universities for society. Therefore policy-makers urge universities to provide more appropriate data on their societal outreach that can be used as a base for funding decisions.

There is no consensus about the social impact of brands and branding in the current literature. The fact that brands create value for many others besides their owners and that the value they create can be of benefit to the greater part of society can be interpreted as "shared value". Brand values are economic artefacts that have to serve the interests of both the brand owners and the clients. The ethical practices and the overall accountability of brand owners towards society are usually a secondary consideration. The higher education sector seems to be an exception in this respect, especially since the proclamation of the 'third mission' of universities (Montesinos et al., 2008). The social value of university brands lies in their contribution to the prosperity of the academic community and the advancement of science, in particular to fostering innovation. There is no universal understanding or general acceptance of the ways in which brands affect the process of developing innovative products and services which are also socially beneficial (cf. Vrabie, 2015). It goes without saying, however, that brands enable enterprises to capture the benefits and social outcomes of innovation.  Furthermore, the necessity to build and protect an institution's brand reputation is also an incentive for enforcing a high corporate social responsibility. This results in a reduction in the negative impact of business activities on both employees and the environment. Being aware of the vulnerability of their brands, enterprises are more inclined to react to social criticism and to adapt to the ethical expectations of society. Unless a brand makes a clear proposition of the social value it should bring to which group of recipients, it will have difficulty in ever standing out for anything distinctive and appreciative. The social value created by brands outweighs the social

costs of brands when they distract from health risks and seduce consumers with their innocent brand names (e.g. for cigarettes or junk food).

In higher education institutions, as in other not for profit institutions, social costs are much higher (scholarships, subsidies, etc.), and so are the social benefits of its brands. A good example would be the promotion of social cohesion among the alumni of an institution who feel connected to a certain university brand and by this achieve a high degree of social solidarity which ensure the success of common project and charities. Brand managers of universites ought to exploit all the different sources of brand value available to a higher education institution. One of the main sources in the higher education sector is excellence which can be a sign of commitment to the brand, but also of its relevance, differentiation and credibility. The mind of the prospect or stakeholder has to be able to register certain signs of excellence and consider them as a competitive advantage. Furthermore, branding is often a vital catalyst for the innovation policies by influencing how new products and services are designed. In addition it supports the recruitment of talented people from the creative industries. Academic brand managers are also responsible for the successful alignment of the interests that administrators, faculty, and the prospective students have in an innovative brand. The current situation as revealed by the survey (see chapter 5) shows an imbalance of past involvement in brand building processes.

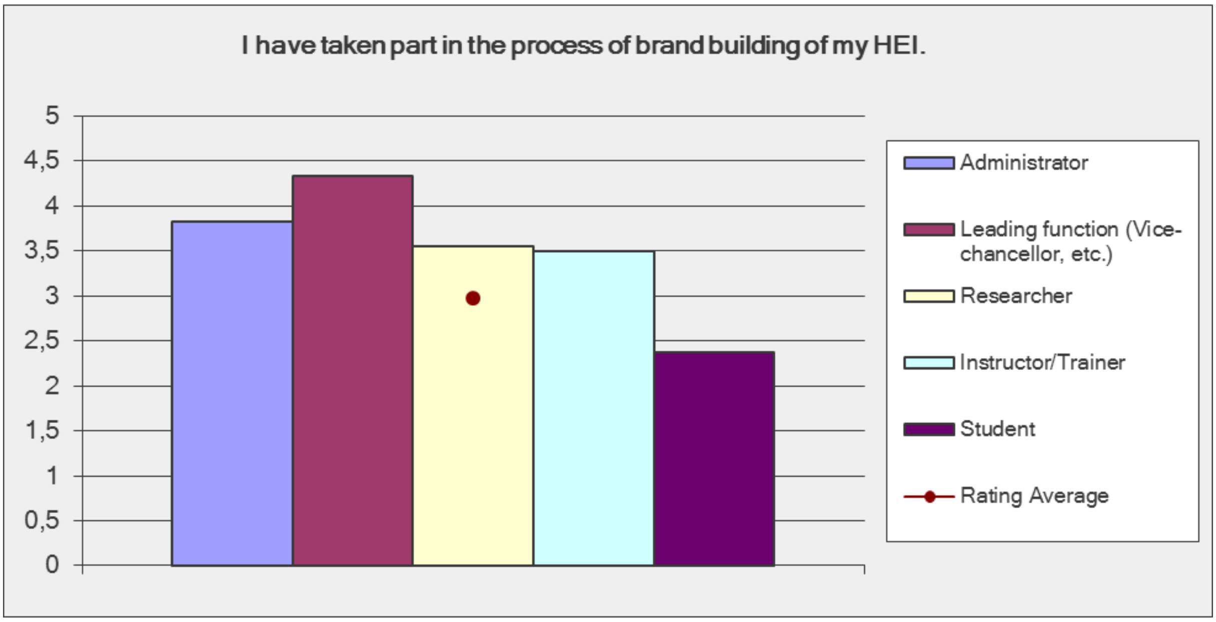


*Figure 5: Participation rate of the various interest groups (survey result)*

Williams and Omar (2014, p.8) point out the importance of a 'brand soul' which is embodied in the interest groups mentioned above:

> "It is clear that brand image, brand identity, and brand soul all work together to create worth; to define brand equity. Ongoing brand management within a service organization is critical to guarantee that the brand identity that the institution believes it is promoting and protecting is indeed consistent with the brand image held by the stakeholders, and the brand soul lived by the employees".

In certain cases, a brand can be considered as a duplex construct by which brand managers can position their products and services through values and thus facilitate the process by which clients recognize and appreciate them more easily (De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1999). An example of this from the sphere of higher education would be the augmentation of university brands with the value of an alliance such as Ivy League or Sorbonne as a mission group identity. The group formation process of the latter has been quite complex. The five departments of the former University of Paris were reshuffled into thirteen interdisciplinary universities (Paris I-XIII). Four of the resulting universities remained the premises of the old Sorbonne, but only three universities have kept the Sorbonne name as true heirs of the brand, that is Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), the New Sorbonne (Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III), and the Panthéon-Sorbonne (Paris I). Howard Davies (2012) comments on this development as follows:

> "The French administration has evidently concluded that the name 'Sorbonne' is the Chateau Latour or the Yves Saint Laurent of French higher education, so the more it is used, the better. Maybe there is a lesson here for the UK. How about "Cambridge East London", or "Oxford in Central Lancashire"? University College London and King's College London could be helpfully repositioned as subsidiaries of the LSE. Those are names bound to attract the attention of the data inputters in Shanghai."

There is no evidence, whatsoever, that the brand architecture of an institution has a major impact on their positioning in league tables. The reputation of a subsidiary will always depend on the core institution; this is also true of campuses abroad. For instance Webster University in Vienna, Austria will always be rated by the potentials that its headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri are known for.

## *6.6 Rankings*

In order to survive the tough competition in the higher education marketplace, universities have to take note of periodical evidence contained in ranking schemes. Ranked lists on a large number of subjects, be they charts of leading books or restaurants, are ubiquitous in the media. Thus they evaluate and arrange content in order to obtain a set that depicts the sequence of quality rates that users are interested in. In higher education, rankings fulfil the function of providing guidance and orientation with regard to superiority as well as inferiority of institutions. Three major league tables

have become the most cited reference tool in the international media: the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, the Times Higher Education or THE World University Rankings and the Quacquarelli Symonds or QS World University Rankings. The importance of rankings for higher education policy has been underlined by many authors, such as in the following example:

> "In spite of the usual rhetoric of university leaders that they do not care about rankings, it is a fact that the power and influence of league tables have increased over the past decade, especially with the establishment of the global higher education market and the increasing popularity of cross-border education...The university mission tends to deviate from one focused on the student, faculty and the community to one focused on the prestige, market value and image of the institution itself in the guise of pursuit of excellence, albeit one based on indicators used by the league tables" (Chao, 2014).

The scope of the QS World University Rankings is to visualize the performance of 800 universities across those functions that are of relevance to their stakeholders: research, teaching, employability and international outlook. The data is arranged according to the following six indicators, each of which is provided with a specific weighting (percentage in brackets):

- academic reputation (40%)
- employer reputation (10%)
- research citations (20%)
- student-to-faculty ratio (20%)
- international faculty ratio (5%)
- international student ratio (5%)

The methodology applied builds upon the strong correlation between global orientation and top positioning in other areas such as output of graduates and citation rates. While companies which invest considerably in branding activities are also often highly innovative, rankings of universities do not pay attention to this correlation at all, as it has been pointed out by Leonard (2015, s.p.):

> "The mix of metrics employed, and their subsequent weighting leading to a ranking, vary with each publication. Their measures are gathered from two sources – objective third parties and institutional self-reports. While they may suggest the quality of the faculty, student body and institutional services or amenities, they do not provide proxies for the outcomes produced by the mix of ingredients".

The administration of the United States of America, for instance, favours a rating system over a ranking system:

> “Arne Duncan, the education secretary, has said that his goal is a ratings system, not a single first-place-to-last-place ranking, and that the ratings will compare only schools that are similar in their mission, their student population and so on. Harvard and Yale, that is; not Harvard and Soka University of America”. (Kaminer, 2013, p.2)

In the USA, President Obama introduced a college rating system in order to provide evidence and support decision-makers responsible for college education. For optimal impact, this rating system will be applied in order that it meets two purposes at the same time: better student information and institutional accountability. Although the terms 'rankings' and 'ratings' are used interchangeably, the objectives and intended outcomes of the concept overlap just in one feature: the information provided in league tables should avoid the majority of students spending more resources for higher education institutions than necessary.

Basically, it can be assumed what Kovacs, Carroll, and Lehman (2014) found out for restaurants is equally true for universities: products, services, or organization that are regarded as authentic, will render higher ratings by clients. The authenticity of a university can be secured mainly by the fact that it follows its distinctive profile. The potentials of distinctiveness become obvious through rankings:

> “The emergence of the discussions on rankings and typologies shows that diversity and differentiation are concepts that appear to remain relevant in the future contexts of both higher education policy making and institutional management. A better understanding of these concepts and more systematic and empirical investigations will be crucial in order to allow us to design effective policies and successful institutional management strategies in higher education” (VanVught, 2008, p.172).

In emerging economies and many higher education institutions are eager to form partnerships with top universities ranking high in well-known league tables. The Brazilian government's national scholarship programme, ‘Science Without Borders’ (http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng ), intents to refer about 100,000 students and researchers to the best higher education institutions around the world. These partners are to be chosen on the basis of their position both in the QS and the THE ranking. In order to secure excellence, India's University Grants Commission also expects those universities abroad that want to sign a partnership agreement with domestic universities to be among the top 500 in the worldwide ranking schemes. Taking into consideration that in the THE World University Rankings of 2012-13, only three Indian institutes were to be listed in the top 400 and the prevailing one, the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur, held position 226-250. It appears that there will be unequal

matches which will bring about a bunch of problems, in particular with regard to quality assurance and joint degrees.

The situation in Austria is not as bad as in India but also unsatisfactory, so that a number of measures are under discussion which could lead to improvement, among others it are also mergers which are considered the key to success by the French authorities:

> "Twenty colleges and research institutes are combining to create Universite Paris-Saclay, soon to be one of France's largest universities, at a cost of about 6.5 billion Euros ($9 billion). It's France's bid to crack the top of rankings that increasingly dominate international higher education. "Our ambition is to be among the top 10" in the rankings compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, said Dominique Vernay, chairman of the foundation creating Paris-Saclay". (Staley, 2014, p. 1)

In some countries, international rankings are the top criterion for the decision as to who is eligible for receiving scholarships or student visa. In Kazakhstan, for instance, citizens who study at those foreign universities ranked in the league tables among the best hundred receive automatically a presidential scholarship, while in the Netherlands, Denmark and Singapore special preference is given to immigrant students holding degrees from top ranking universities. In Austria the same holds true for faculty from abroad applying for positions at Austrian universities. Thus Ellen Hazelkorn (2014) comes to the conclusion that rankings have transformed the concept of the 'world-class'-university into a strategic tool which puts a premium on the status and the university brand. As a positive result of league tables she considers the fact that they have underpinned a profound transformation of higher education policy, which has put additional investments high on the political agenda of many countries. Thus Millot (2014) claims that these unexpected and perverse effects could be countered, if attempts were made to consider higher education systems as a whole rather than individual higher education institutions. LinkedIn, for instance, provides another alternative to existing university ranking systems, with a specific focus on career outcomes of graduates who received at least four year undergraduate degrees from those universities (Choudaha, 2015). Its main aim is to help students to make informed choices by using metrics that directly impact recruitment for which programme rankings seem to be better suited than by institutional rankings. For the time being, LinkedIn rankings are only applicable to the US American, British and Canadian institutions and are restricted to a limited number of disciplines. Choudaha (2015) points out that there are still certain drawbacks to be noticed with this ranking scheme:

> "Like any other ranking system, LinkedIn's methodology is imperfect and has several limitations. For example, the career outcomes used in the rankings are confounded by

several other variables beyond the institutions of graduation. Philosophically, they may also lead to a parochial view of educational experiences by reducing them to career outcomes alone".

As a matter of fact, for each university and profession, LinkedIn calculates the percentage of relevant graduates who have obtained what they consider desirable jobs. These percentages allow LinkedIn to rank universities based on career outcomes across the various professional areas.

LinkedIn aggregates career information that its members include in their professional profiles and compiles a list of leading companies for each subject category. Subsequently, the best programmes whose graduates successfully obtain jobs at those companies emerge. Although there is a large member base of more than 347 million professionals, there is the danger of possible flaws in the data due to underrepresentation of certain professionals. Therefore LinkedIn attempts to correct possibly biased internal statistics with external, publicly available datasets by using the established technique of post-stratification weighting.

### *6.6.1 Positioning in league tables*

While Bunzel (2007) could not find any evidence regarding the improvement of branded universities in rankings, there is a clear correlation between branding, reputation and positioning, as expressed in the following quotation: "It could also be argued that the motivation of branding is often to enhance reputation and to positively influence the university's rankings and that therefore market share is replaced with business school league table positions" (Khanna, M. et al., 2014, p.127).

While reputation rankings are more or less subjective, such as the charts of favourite songs, others such as league tables of the overall achievements of universities depend on objective criteria and metrics. Rankings refer either to a single attribute, such as the number of downloads to determine the most popular music at a given point of time, or on multiple attributes, such as the number of projects, publications, and citations to determine the research output of an institution.

Most of the league tables mentioned above are multi-attribute rankings, which are usually multi-faceted and complex. Thus they require elaborate visualization techniques, so that the ways in which these attributes determine the position and the influence of changes in one or more attributes on the ranking results are easy to understand. The interpretation, modification, and comparison of complex rankings also require advanced visual tools.

For higher education experts, for instance, it will be of interest to see at a glance whether a particular institution is ranked higher than its peers in the same region. It could be the case that the particular university achieves higher scores across several attributes or that only one factor is the sole cause for

the higher position in the league table. The great challenge for rankings using multiple attributes is to ensure the comparability of the wide range of attributes and to visualise this in a combined table. This task can only be accomplished by procedures which normalize the heterogeneous attributes and assign weights to each of them within a single map. In this way more emphasis can be put, for instance, on the impact of teaching or the ratio between student and faculty while less relevance might be given to the citation rate of research papers.

A further problem to be addressed is the comparison of diverse rankings results from various sources. Users might want to compare them to find out if a particular university received high scores across all rankings or if their positioning varies considerably. In addition, it is of importance to be able to study how the ranking of a university has changed over a certain period of time. Finally, most universities want to find out what actions are to be taken with regard to which attributes in order to do better in future rankings.

This application of ranking results has become a key method of strategic planning by Austrian university leaders, too. As a consequence a project has been started at the University of Linz (Upper Austria) and the Technical University of Graz (Styria) with the aim to develop a method that allows the tailoring of multi-attribute rankings by means of interactive visualization. In their paper Gratzl et al. (2013) introduced a new technique that overcomes the limitations of static methods and offers an in-depth analysis of the specifics of multi-attribute rankings in various disciplines. Furthermore, they describe the design and implementation of LineUp, a visual way of modifying rankings that consist of complex combinations of attributes. The authors evaluated LineUp in a research project that demonstrated the feasibility of their approach. The study proved that participants were capable of handling complex league tables without any difficulty if they used LineUp as a tool. An essential feature of the LineUp ranking visualization method is the use of stacked bar charts. Furthermore, LineUp can be applied to the comparison of multiple rankings within the same group of universities. Its specific features have been described as follows:

> "When comparing rankings, the individual rankings are lined up horizontally, and slope graphs are used to connect the items across rankings. The angle of the slope between two rankings represents the difference in ranks between two neighbouring rankings. Stacked bars allow users to perceive both the combined attribute score and the contribution of individual attribute scores to it. However, stacked bars complicate the comparison of individual attribute scores across multiple items, as only the first one is aligned to the baseline. By looking at the bar charts, users are able to see what factors contribute to the ranks and how they are weighted" (Gratzl et. al., 2013, p.2281).

As a matter of fact, the availability of methods to optimize rankings by testing and displaying to what extent a single or several attributes have to be improved to move upwards in a given ranking table, is a great asset to any university. There are a number of other computer-aided methods available, of course; some of them have been deduced from other applications, such as web based data mining. For instance, Orduña-Malea (2013) has pointed out that cybermetrics can also render some sort of rankings: "The use and impact of web resources and services provided by universities can be measured through various web indicators – especially their size, visibility and usage – and have been used to design web ranking of universities, among which the Ranking Web of Universities stands out for its quality and coverage".

### *6.6.2 Reputational rankings*

Reputational rankings deserve particular attention by universities because they have the strongest impact on university brands: "In fact, much of what is described as branding in higher education would be better labelled as 'reputation management', or even public relations" (Temple, 2006, p.17). The reputation of a university influences not only academics when planning their career path or other institutions of higher learning when searching for project partners, but even more so international students when selecting their places of study. This is part of the conceptual interdependence of a brand and the reputation of an institution as it is described below:

> "The fact that rankings are generally perceived as having a positive impact on institutional reputation suggests a strong correlation between rankings and reputation. Disentangling reputation and rankings can be difficult, not least because many rankings rely to a greater or lesser extent on reputation, itself a self-referential and self-perpetuating concept. People's perception of the best university is often based on those universities which are accorded prestige by rankings" (Hazelkorn, Loukkola and Zhang, 2014, p.35).

Andrew Gunn (2013) uses the three concepts of 'reputation by association', 'status signalling' and 'brand building' to explain the incentives for alliances of any sort. According to Bourdieu (1984), reputation is to be considered as a type of symbolic capital, that is a resource attributed to an institution on the grounds of honour, prestige as well as recognition. Byrne (2015) describes the difference between brand and reputation as such: "A brand is what you build; a reputation is what you earn".

There are a number of specialized research institutions, such as the world's leading research and advisory firm for reputation, simply called "Reputation Institute" (https://www.reputationinstitute.com/ ), which carry out surveys dealing with the reputation of enterprises. On the basis of the annual Reputation Leaders Survey, the Reputation Institute (2013,

p.2) comes to the following conclusion: “The results indicate that although 79% agree that we now live in a Reputation Economy, an economy where who you are matters more than what you produce, only 20% say their company is ready to compete in it.” It seems, however, that universities are an exception in this respect, because they have taken up the challenge: they contribute avidly to the numerous reputation ranking schemes. What is true of enterprises is also true of countries, university towns or campuses in their role as a place:

> “To raise their competitive profile, places must employ a systematic approach to reputation management. That means understanding how they are perceived by current and potential external stakeholders; defining a strategy to emphasize the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses revealed in those perceptions; developing key performance indicators to ensure accountability; and making sure that all relevant government agencies are speaking and acting as one” (Prado and Trad, 2013, p.2).

Most reputation rankings collect their data from subjective insights of experienced scholars who have expressed their opinions at the international level before. As a rule they estimate the reputation of those institutions with which they have closely collaborated, of which they have taken note of relevant - or even outstanding - articles or presentations at scientific congresses. Thus the formula for success reads more or less like this: notice builds status. Global university partnerships are usually considered to be the cornerstones of effective reputation building which gives them also some sort of stability despite their otherwise fragile nature (Baty, 2012). The identification and selection of the most suitable partners is again based upon their institutional reputation. In addition, academic and cultural complementarity, as well as the distinctiveness of institutional profiles, play a decisive role in this process.

QS has produced reputational rankings in five major research areas since 2005. The advantage of this type of survey is quite evident: faculty members are used to evaluate the quality of research within their field of expertise. While citations are only available after a considerable time lag, the responses from experts are at hand immediately. The QS World University Ranking Tables of 2013 distinguish between 'Academic Reputation Score' and the 'Employer Reputation Score', which is an indication for this particular university ranking organisation that employer branding is of equal relevance to higher education institutions (see chapter below). Austrian universities currently do not do well in international league tables, in particular with regard to reputation rankings. In the QS World University Ranking of 2014, the University of Vienna has improved its position from place 158 to 156, while the Universities of Salzburg or of Klagenfurt are still ranging in the group starting at 701.

The reputational rankings of Japanese universities (Daigaku Burando Rankingu) is organized by Nikkei Business Publications (http://www.nikkeibp.com/ ) and released annually in November. It is based upon questionnaires sent out to businesspeople who have children in the respective region of targeted universities. The indicators are related mainly to reputation and popularity.

The Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings have gradually developed into a powerful and highly cited global benchmark of the prestige of higher education institutions: as a matter of fact, it has become a trusted university brand index. Those universities that lose position in the ranking tables every year are mostly public institutions of higher education. This trend, of course, reflects the situation which is frequently described as state funding cuts. The Austrian universities are also part of this group. Only Harvard University has been able to defend its top position since the beginning of the world reputation rankings of THE in 2011. This is certainly due to the high visibility and the great awareness that this institution has created within the scientific community. Therefore, the scores of all other universities in the league table are calculated as the percentage of Harvard's number of nominations as being the best in a particular field. This system with the best institution scoring 100 at the top is intended to provide a mathematical perspective on the relativity of academic reputation. Only the positioning of the top fifty institutions are listed, the rest are given in alphabetical order in groups of ten due to the narrow differentials between institutions at this point. Some universities have gained their reputation due to age and the exceptional amount of past achievements. Other universities have gained their reputation as a result of more recent occurrences that caused a positive reaction that went often beyond their own planning or expectation, such as having a Nobel Prize winner among their faculty. Nevertheless, academic achievement is not necessarily linked with reputation: for instance Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has been ranked 76$^{th}$ by the THE World University Rankings in 2013 and 41$^{st}$ by the QS World University Rankings in 2013, but reached only position 95 in the THE World Reputation Rankings in 2014. The discrepancy is due to the fact that some universities aspire to be what they would like to appear and others are excellent without appearing to be so. When higher education branding experts are going to look back in years to come, they will agree with Shakespeare, who claims in "Othello" that "reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving" (Shakespeare, 1622, Act2, Sc. 3, 257-259). In contrast to this opinion, Heil and Whittaker (2011) take a less fatalistic approach and claim that reputations are mainly determined by the world which an institution sets up. They also criticise that league tables cannot depict the identity of an organisation sufficiently:

> "Although quantitative measurements of these categories allow for simple comparisons among different companies and over time, giving management a simple tool to track progress or regress, they fall short of giving the kind of rich picture of the assumed

> organisational identity in the eye of the external stakeholders that is required to drive corporate branding initiatives and well-informed initiatives for organisational culture and identity change" (Heil and Whittaker, 2011, p.271)

Clady (2012) hints at the fact that organizational cognition sometimes uses personality traits to characterise an organisation's reputation, which stresses the importance of a brand personality. Roberts (2009) gives a good overview of the various concepts of reputation and their impact upon the higher education market. Specifically he mentions the fact that there is a certain interdependence between an institutional reputation and the reputation of the higher education sector in general:

> "The evidence is also that the reputation of a specific college or university will be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the collective reputation of the industry sector. There is typically a correlation between familiarity and/or satisfaction or favourability at a level of sector, as well as individual organisations or brands" (Roberts, 2009, p.73).

Since the higher education sector is valued differently in various countries, the standing of a particular university becomes also an issue of nation branding. Nevertheless, there are also a number of global activities which aim at the worldwide improvement of academic reputation such as The World 100 Reputation Network which was established in 2006.

The findings from Losana's doctoral thesis (2015) support the suggestion that organisations should include the RepTrak Pulse Index in high-level scorecards together with other major indicators, both financial and non-financial. There are numerous factors that contribute to the reputation of universities and there are many ways of measuring it. It will thus remain a matter of individual judgement to determine whether the brand or the intrinsic quality have a higher impact on the level of the reputation: "The reputation of an institution and its quality may be related, but they need not be identical. Higher education institutions try to influence their external images in many ways, and not only by maximizing their quality" (VanVught, 2008, p.169).

### *6.7 The brand experience (lovemarks)*

The values which determine the decision process when selecting one brand versus another have become increasingly driven by emotions. In addition to the commonly used rationale of the price-of-entry value, successful brands also emphasize the emotional values which prevail in the category in which they compete, and utilize them as a vehicle for meaningful differentiation. Rational behaviour has its limitations when it comes to the formation of consumption habits which are the ultimate aim of brand marketers. Daniel Kahneman (2011), Nobel Prize winner in 2002, argues that the human mind incorporates two systems: an intuitive "system one", which counts for many instant decisions

due to its propensity to react to subtle cues. The much slower “system two” rationalises the decisions of system one and possibly overrules them. Thus branding is first of all a way to address system one, nudging clients towards purchasing. By acting through the emotional system, brand managers take into account that clients are not the rational agents who would make commercial success more predictable. According to Kahneman (2011), emotion prevails over information which means that more attention has to be paid to the purpose of a brand than to the qualities of the product or service. Recent research has revealed the correlation between emotions and the functions of a brand, in particular with regard to the higher education environment. Chapleo et al. (2011, p.31) were able to prove the validity of the following hypothesis: “Those universities that project their emotional values well also tend to present their functional values well”.

Successful brands are built on an emotional bedrock of trust and attachment derived from the clients' experience of using services offered by an institution. Usually the brand experience can also be valued under the heading of 'trust capital' which has become the '4th C' of organizational value, besides financial,  intellectual and human capital (IHG, 2015). Brands are also designed to enhance this experience aesthetically and psychologically. Brands not only satisfy the functional needs of clients, but have to meet emotional needs such as desires and ambitions and thus are a key factor for consumers to enjoy and love a brand. “Expected utility theory, for example, is entirely about the rules and rationality that should govern decision utilities; it has nothing at all to say about hedonic experiences. Of course, the two concepts of utility will coincide if people want what they enjoy, and enjoy what they chose for themselves” (Kahneman, 2011, p.377). In this sense, they are determined both by current and future market trends as well as prevailing and exclusive cultural conventions. Hans Domizlaff, one of the pioneers of branding in Germany, claims that a brand has a face like a human being, and the value of a brand for the clients lies in the familiarity with this face (Domizlaff, 1939, p.91). Although familiarity enhances trust, it is a much weaker emotion than experiencing an outstanding and distinct personality. Only strong brand personalities are in a position to provide a sustainable brand experience.

Giving preference to brand experience, instead of brand identity and brand personality is a strategy that is particularly suitable for organizations. It requires a different approch in looking at an organization, and - in the case of universities - seeing students as co-creators rather than consumers. Kahneman (2011, p.253) dedicates a whole chapter to “the outside view” but admits that “it will never be the natural thing to do”. The outside view of higher education usually focusses on the service quality of the institutions and allows a comparison with the hospitality industry. For this reason, Khanna et al. (2014, p.128) consider university studies to be an experiential service:

> “In the case of an educational service, the contact between the consumer (student) and the service provider (higher education institute) is of very high intensity and occurs through multiple touchpoints throughout the journey of the consumer (student)”.

In literature one can find various metaphors for this intimate situation in which a university brand is experienced. While the faculty usually does not think of students as customers or even consumers, the administrative staff has no problem in doing so; thus there is a great branding potential in students’ commitment. This is due to the fact that tuition is interactive while when utilizing a commercial service this is not necessarily the case. The entire student experience ought to be a full exposure to the brand values of the institution. Therefore universities should not be obsessed about competing with them, but design common experiences for all their members, in the form of joined activities across all their missions. Job satisfaction and knowledge acquisition come first of all from experiences that are more or less useful: “This illustrates the importance that students place on the overall experience and that when they are out in the world as brand ambassadors what they will articulate is the brand experience” (Harvest, 2003, p.8).

Experiences, however cannot be created and then transmitted to people, in fact they are entities which people have to shape for themselves. Universities have to provide a suitable framework for this. For students, the brand experience has to be linked to the emotional experience of learning. The following quotation, however, makes it clear that there is no point in offering a unified experience that will fit all types of students:

> “An educational program with a successful brand personality will prompt potential students or participants to say, 'That's my kind of program.' A conservative school with a dress code and other rules of student conduct will appeal to students who value social conformity and a familiar and safe environment. Schools that offer students many choices about curriculum and living arrangements will appeal to students who value their independence and who do not feel uncomfortable making decisions” (Kotler and Fox, 1995, p.219).

The previous focus on constructing a brand around its personality has been given up in favour of an emotional connection with all five senses. Sensual reactions are the only ones that most people rely on when deciding for a brand. “The use of sensory branding is growing rapidly and it is predicted to be the future of strategic branding” (Khanna and Mishra, 2012, p.623). What makes classes most memorable for students is the impact of the sensory experience involving all the senses. The absence of any other experience than a visual one prevents many students from enrolling in online courses. Thus the potential market for MOOCs is limited because the overall sensory perception is missing. In this respect, the education market is somehow similar to the vehicle market, in which consumers use

the internet only in order to find out about the best offers, but almost all of them visit a showroom before they finalize the purchase. It is certainly due to the power of senses that students strive for physical bonds with a university and its campus, a relationship which is to be based not only upon academic awards, but on enjoyment, appreciation and love. The brand experience of a university can also be enhanced by the design of the campus and its facilities. In Austria the new buildings of the University of Economics serve as an excellent example for this proposition by means of the inclusion of world class architecture and art. Influences from buildings and artefacts are also considered in the model developed by Steiner, Sundström and Sammalisto (2013) for a better brand identity and reputation. Every university ought to deal with campus design holistically, applying all senses in order to create brand personalities that faculty and students will become attached to. They should take into account the effects of "embodied cognition" since it is a proven fact that not only conscious awareness, but also bodily sensations influence the way in which a brand is perceived.

While Magids et al. (2015) identified over 300 universal motivating emotions that connect clients with a brand, Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014), however, prove that only brand love predicts brand loyalty sufficiently in comparison with other attitude models relying on the perceived quality of a brand. Their paper investigates the juxtaposition of anthropomorphism and brand love by following five theoretical approaches: cognitive fluency, self-extension, category level evaluation, cognitive consistency and self-congruence. They also claim that if a brand can be perceived as being "anthropomorph", it is more likely to be also an object of brand love. The creation of a lovemark (Roberts, 2004) is therefore most appropriate for higher education institutions as well.

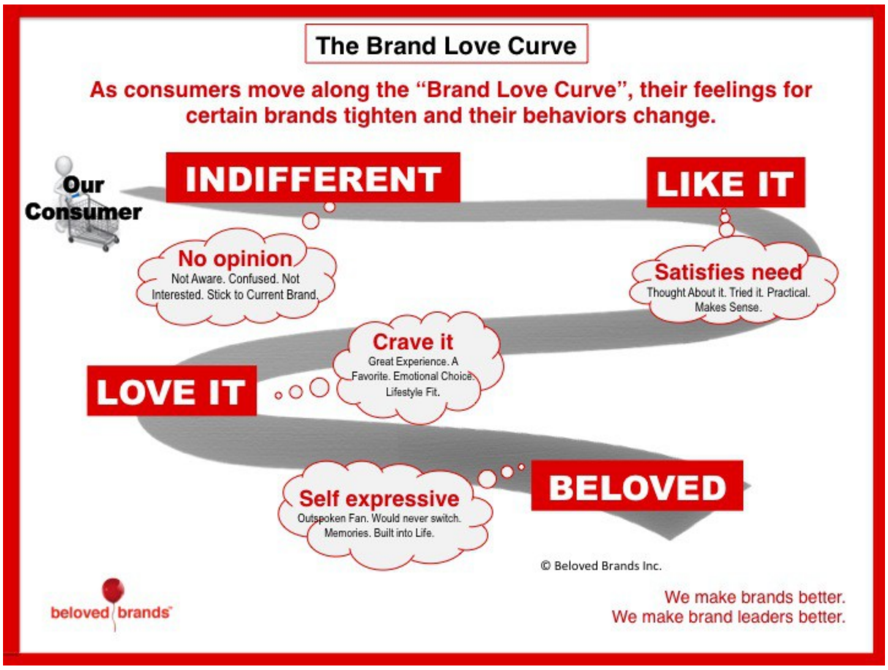


*Figure 6: The Brand Love Curve (Beloved Brands, 2012 ff)*

The translation of factors that in other fields are constituents of love has been attempted by branding experts before, as the following quotation proves: “Our study also sought to determine to what extent a religious factor – faith, belief, belonging, and community – might serve to guide the future branding. At first glance, religion and brands might seem almost insultingly far apart. But are they really?” (Lindstrom, 2010, p.6). At least not in the case of university brands one could argue, taking into account their history, in particular the times when they were closely attached to Jesuit monasteries. The investigation of the similarities between religious experiences, learning experiences and brand experiences is crucial for  an improved understanding of how universities have survived in a competitive educational market. Especially the theories of Dewey (1997) in his opus magnum on 'Experience & Education” can be a great asset to universities when they develop their distinctive brand experience. His theory is a developmental one in a double sense: tuition should be organised in a sequence that corresponds to the evolution of our civilization and at the same time the developing capabilities and awakening interests of the pupils. Dewey made it quite clear: “The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative” (Dewey, 1997, p. 25). Accordingly experiential education cannot simply be reduced to 'learning by doing', because it is also a pattern of social conditioning. In particular “the pattern of 'experience-reflect-learn' might be considered an *ideology* of experiential learning rather than a philosophy or a theory of experiential learning” (Seaman, 2008, p.15).

At the ideal university the education experience and the brand experience of the students coincide. Although attributes like quality, excellence and performance have become embedded in most academic evaluation procedures, it is the quality of the emotional experience both of the tuition and the university brand that will set higher education institutions apart. As a rule, university brands build student loyalty for a simple purpose, which is the acquisition of an academic degree. Roberts (2004) argues that brands should inspire loyalty beyond reason, an ideal that university leaders should keep in mind if they anticipate their institution’s alumni to act as brand ambassadors. Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) confirm in their study that any brand experience has a direct impact on loyalty by means of brand personality associations.

The education experience should also lead to the enhancement of the personal brand of both students and faculty. This phenomenon is called 'brand identity fusion' in a paper by Lin and Sung (2014), describing the situation in which the values of the institution are taken over by the individual. The benefits for the education process can be concluded from the following quotation:

> “For fused individuals, social identities are intensely personal as they care as much about the outcomes of the social group as about their own personal outcomes. In that sense, identity

fusion may be particularly important when facing challenges to one's personal or social identities" (Lin and Sung, 2014, p.57).

Byrne (2015) described a process of identity fusion which had been organized by King's College London on the occasion of their rebranding exercise:

> "We conducted qualitative market research with external audiences to help identify the attitudes, expectations and emotional responses to specific brand proposals. Internally, we consulted all students and staff through a web survey in 2012 to gauge the responses to King's attributes to which we received over 2,000 responses. We also conducted focus groups with staff, current students, prospective students and parents, KCLSU, alumni and international agents and advisers. This research and feedback has shaped our thinking."

Such a fusion will expand the brand by creating new ideas and missions together with other stakeholders. The following figure contains the key questions that lead for instance to a common brand purpose:


*Figure 7: Determining the brand purpose in an educational setting (Roberts, 2004)*

The literature on higher education lists a number of other opportunities for brand enhancement at universities, such as MOOCs (McGregor, 2013) or internationalisation (Kamara, 2013). If the universities are willing to take up these opportunities, they can divert the brand experience to various organisational levels. There is evidence, however, that the implementation becomes more difficult the higher the level concerned. At the level of vice-chancellors branding ideas tend to remain rather theoretical, if they are accepted at all. The incident reported from Chris Chapleo seems to be a most typical one:

> "Dr Chapleo, a former professional marketer who moved into higher education 12 years ago, acknowledged that there was 'cynicism' towards branding in the sector. At his first meeting

with a vice-chancellor to discuss the brand of a university, Dr Chapleo said he was greeted by "folded arms" and the words: 'branding is about Mars bars, not about places like ours'. But he argued that this hostility was based on 'inappropriate' beliefs about branding and said that universities have a brand 'whether they like it or not' " (Matthews, 2012, p.1).

### *6.8 Development of a brand strategy*

In a recent report, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO, 2013) explored the way in which entrepreneurial branding strategies interact with a company's innovation strategies. Thus business planning and brand management have to follow an aligned procedure in order to render the expected success.


*Figure 8: Suggestion for a parallel strategical approach in business planning and brand management*

Most institutions are not brand-led in their strategy, which would mean that they concentrate on building the right set of ideas in the minds of clients and other stakeholders. As a consequence, they do not develop any kind of brand orientation either. In order to gain evidence on this assumption, Booz together with the brand consultant Wolff Olins carried made an inquiry among marketing experts from all over Europe (Harter et al., 2005). The results showed that over 90 % of the entrepreneurs questioned believe that their brand is a key element of their success. Yet fewer than 20% claim that the management of their brand is part and parcel of their business strategy. The research project allowed them to concoct a typology of the companies researched:

> "Brand-guided companies have clearly-defined brand values that are understood throughout the entire organization. They establish well-defined ownership for management of the brand at top management level. This enables the brand to provide the cohesive force that guides key activities—such as product development, customer service, sales, and operations—and supports the strategic management process" (Harter et al., 2005, p.1).

The clarity of focus that a distinctive brand orientation provides is also bound to create increased effectiveness, efficiency and competitive advantage. Differentiation is a crucial prerequisite for the branding process, even if this means to create brands that are based on a single main benefit. In order to differentiate one institution from another, it is most useful to have some kind of symbolic entity or image that can be advertised, registered and protected. This necessitates a strict brand alignment covering all operations of an enterprise including human resources practices and corporate behaviour, as well as leadership and communications. Brands that lose impact and relevance often fail to pursue their core values, such as the protection of clients from disappointment. The perils of such developments can only be reduced by consequent brand image controlling. Brand values have to be differentiated as soon as someone else in a specific market segment is going to use them as well.

In the same way as butter used to be the only product that was used as a spread before soft margarine had been invented as an alternative, universities used to be the only brand of higher education before polytechnics became a popular alternative. The tension between two alternatives usually create synthetic brands as a kind of compromise; in the higher education sphere of Austria, for instance, universities of applied sciences came into existence in the 1990s. It has become evident that the practical application of Hegel's dialectic (Ball, 1979) to the higher education marketplace usually generates innovative results. And according to Hegel, it is usually the "Zeitgeist (spirit of the time)" which determines what can survive in the long run. Kenny (2012, p.585) makes it clear that brands are informed by the spirit of the time, because: "Spirit is not something given in advance in all its fullness: it proceeds from potentiality to actuality, and the motive force of history is spirit's drive to actualize its potential". There is no doubt that these two concepts from the philosophy of Hegel have had quite an impact on the theory of branding and its relationship to trend research. The observation of trends makes developers of brand strategies become wary of following inappropriate and fully out-of-touch beliefs and value systems of prospective clients. It is important to discover a viable synthesis of both approaches and adapt it to current trends. In his opus magnum "Thus spoke Zarathustra", Nietzsche (1885) explains that most social values have their origin in cultural or religious belief systems. Thus it is necessary to decide if it is more viable to make existing values relevant to a particular brand or to create new ones. In many fields of practice there is a very limited

number of values that can serve as a basis for innovative brand positioning. Kenny (2012, p.780) talks about the idea of a “transvaluation of values” in this respect. In any case, the brand has to reflect those values with which clients want to associate and which are close to the way they really are. Brands that exist outside current constraints and that serve certain communities of interest are known as niche brands, such as the British fashion label FCUK. The Austrian higher education scene offers at least two niche brands, i.e. Donauuniversität Krems (DUK) and Institute of Science and Technology (IST) Austria. In order to become a niche brand, institutional rebranding might be necessary as it is the case with a number of professional higher education (PHE) institutions in Austria, in particular the so-called Fachhochschulen. This is a tendency which has also been confirmed at the European level: “We observe a tendency to rebrand PHE institutions as universities of applied sciences / technical universities and more collaborations of PHE programmes with academic institutions for doctoral research” (Camilleri, A. F. et al., 2014, p.94). The type of institution provides thus a core of characteristics that can be used as a basis for the development of a new brand strategy.

Focarino (2015, p.18) comes up with an interesting suggestion for a strategy which could be easily transferred into a higher education setting: “Individual brands, as intellectual property, may also be traded independently of a firm through acquisitions. Large firms may opt to acquire individual brands from smaller firms because they have the organizational skills and financial resources to rejuvenate or reposition pre-existing brands”. To some extent this would come close to a franchise model.

Dawar and Bagga (2015) have developed a new scheme for mapping brand strategies which follow two basic, although contradictory, endeavours: on the one hand to make the brand distinctive and on the other hand to make it central as well as representative in its category.

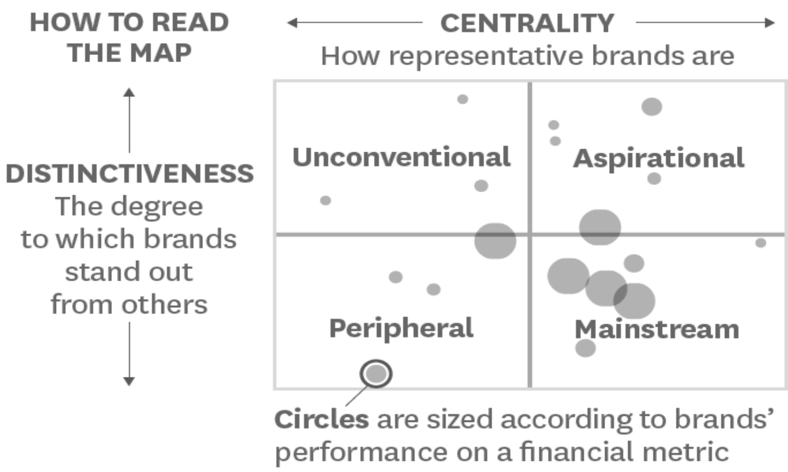


*Figure 9: The Centrality-Distinctiveness Map (Dawar and Bagga, 2015, p.90)*

According to this concept, higher education institutions are well advised to aim at becoming aspirational brands which are well positioned in the upper right hand quadrant. One way of getting there is by launching innovations that redefine the category in which they are currently in. The authors make it quite clear, however, that this requires a most delicate strategy: "The key for aspirational brands is to make their distinctive features sufficiently mainstream to be widely appealing without becoming run-of-the-mill. They must defend their position against challengers coming at them from the mainstream and unconventional quadrants" (Dawar and Bagga, 2015, p.93). Niche institutions can be found in the quadrant of "unconventional brands", which ought to see that they become more mainstream without compromising distinctiveness. This could be accomplished by making the brand's unique features more widely accepted among stakeholders.

### *6.9 Brand identity and brand image*

According to MacDonald (2013), phases of organizational change are the windows of opportunity for universities to create new brand identities, such as a rebranding project or the enactment of a new organisational law. In Austria this happened for instance in 2004 when its universities were given full autonomy and, as a consequence, started to articulate their identities in a new way during this time. At this point it became clear to most of the institutions involved that identity is evolutionary, complex, and mutable. This is particularly true in the case of mergers where some flexibility is required as explained in a recent advisory paper published by the European University Association (EUA):

> "Indeed, it is a widely held view that old institutional identities cannot be removed or deconstructed; rather, a new, positive brand must be established that will sooner or later take precedence over the old universities in people's minds. A well communicated mission is an essential complement to this; an innovative and inspirational mission for the merged institution was seen as being of vital importance" (Pruvot, et al, 2015, p.50).

In some areas brand integrity is essential for the brand image; in others it is not. In higher education marketing it is important that the brands are aligned to and derived from truth, which means that the brands should not be communicated in terms of what they can become, but what they actually are, despite the fact that Plato claims that the true nature of things is invisible to us. Braun (2004, p.43) draws the following conclusion from this fact: "The objects throw shadows onto the wall in front of the audience, and the consumers are able to recognize the various brands on this basis. This early 'magic lantern show' is the equivalent of a modern-day presentation of brand logos, pack designs, or advertising executions." This refers also to the shorthand function of the brand, which is characterised by picking out just a few of the distinctive characteristics of a concept. It links with modern conceptology (Wüster, 2003) which explains the interdependence between properties and

attributes as well as the meaning of essence, category and proposition. What defines a Westwood jacket are its exact physical properties, but what makes it sell are its structure and form. In other words it is necessary to distinguish between what is objectively true of a brand and what brand owners would like customers to think about it. The difference between primary and secondary qualities as originally described by John Locke (Nidditch, 1975) is the key to successful brand management. The secondary qualities of a branded beverage for instance comprise its perceived benefits as well as its smell and taste which can be deduced only from a consumer's subjective and disparate experience.

As one can learn from various ranking results there seems to be a strong correlation between the brand images of institution and pertinent service: “The common notion is that corporate brand image has a spillover effect on their product brand image, which in this study implies a spillover effect from the image of the university college to the image of the study programs” (Helgesen and Nesset, 2007, p.43). In other words, the image of e.g. a literature course at Cambridge University is mainly determined by the so-called Oxbridge brand. Another example of the usage of a favourable usage of a corporate brand would be the reference to the foundation by royal charter as is the case with The Royal Academy of Music, The Royal Conservatory of Music, or the Royal College of Music, to name just a few. Balmer et al. (2006) have investigated this phenomenon and claim that the royalty, as an institution, is likely to be a corporate brand in most monarchies. The House of Windsor, for instance, is managed by the Queen in a way analogous to what would be appropriate for a corporate heritage brand. The conclusion from this study for “crown” brands is the following:

> “Originally a mark of power, it is increasingly used as a mark of sovereignty and of quality. It is one of the most easily and widely recognised symbols, and has even been marshalled (albeit with different visual treatment) as a quality sign for products and services including hotels (Crowne Plaza), beer (Kronenburg) and three Swedish bicycle brands (Rex, King and Monark)” (Balmer et al., 2006, p.140).

Alternatively, tradition in general can be an asset to a university brand as Line (2015) confirms: “Students love institutions with pedigree: the older, the better. The websites of the universities of Durham, Edinburgh and Newcastle are littered with images of their oldest buildings. So much so, that you could be forgiven for thinking that the entire city around the university is ancient and ornate”.

### *6.10 Brand visibility and communication*

Brand communications will not only render factual information on the respective brand, but also contribute to its familiarity, attraction and reputation. The creation of distinctive associations and meanings can support these aims and influence the target audience effectively. Since perceptions

that touch and move people are the basis for making decisions, so-called “lovemarks” are more successful than others with stakeholders of an organisation in enhancing the awareness and commitment to a particular brand. The external and internal messages about a brand must be identical and become part of the same narrative. The public relations strategy should be focussed on the brand's promise with its specific attributes and characteristics. The main aim of brand communications would be to give the university a more effective and memorable voice and promote its academic reputation all over the world. Any brand communication should be formulated in a way that allows the connection to other types of communication (Wegmann, 2012). Chapleo et al. (2011) investigated the websites of twenty universities in the United Kingdom by applying a combined approach involving content analysis. They consider the actual delivery of a brand, i.e. the ‘visual identity’, as a key factor of the brand experience. The visual identity has been a major issue of the rebranding exercise of King's College London:

> „Research has shown that our current visual identity doesn’t work hard enough for King’s in today’s tough competitive environment that understates our value and resonance, particularly for younger undergraduates and prospective students. This has been shown through market research and feedback. The need to refresh the visual identity was advocated by all groups interviewed; the common view was that the personality being portrayed by King’s was too restrained and looked dated in comparison with its more assertive London competitors“ (Byrne, 2015).

There were a number of other commented rebranding exercises by higher education institutions in recent years which had the common aim to ease communication by a clearer name or acronym. Queen Mary University of London for instance favours now a more terse abbreviation, namely QML, which replaces previous acronyms such as QM, QMUL, QMU, QMW and QMWC. Since such changes can be quite costly due to the change of stationery and possibly a redesign of the logo, it is essential that they are based on sound branding and communication theories. QMUL, however, has been retained for the university's URL http://www.qmul.ac.uk/ , perhaps to save additional expenses. A congruous website address seems to be very important with regard to online branding. Rooksby (2014, p.2) points towards the fact that domain name extension 'EDU' can also serve as a kind of roof brand for higher education institutions:

> “The rationale for giving colleges and universities their own domain name space, uncluttered by competing claims of others outside of higher education, is consonant with society’s historic conception of higher education as a different type of industry, detached from the market, and allegiant to its own unique, public-serving norms and academic values”.

Another recent rebranding exercise has been reported from Scotland, where the name of the „University of Abertay Dundee“ has been shortened into plain „Abertay University“. The Abertay University Communications Centre commented this change with the simple remark that the new name had the merit of sounding much friendlier than the previous one. In order to exploit this merit to the full extent it would be necessary to accompany the change with other measures that make the brand of a „friendly university“ more credible (http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/comment/the-poppletonian/you-make-me-feel-brand-new/2011864.article). In Austria there seems to be a contrary tendency which makes short brand names even longer, giving them a stronger imposition: e.g. Universität Klagenfurt was turned into Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt, or Universität Salzburg into Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg.

### *6.11 Global brand marketing*

A powerful political point about brands is their tendency to cross borders quickly and to create international consumer cultures and communities. Examples such as Coca Cola or Ikea can be easily translated into other fields, also to higher education, if we consider the unbroken popularity of MOOCs and other online learning platforms (Cavanagh, 2015). There is growing evidence that the field of online education has the potential to come up with a number of new global brands in the future, a view that is also expressed in the following quotation:

> “The shift from traditional to interactive online learning and the increase in the non-traditional student population have had a significant and lasting impact on the way in which education as a business model has evolved. As a result, effective brand differentiation – how colleges and universities distribute that messaging and the overall student experience from enrolment to career preparation – is crucial to ensuring continued growth” (Fireng, 2014, p.11).

In many fields globalisation is the gateway to larger markets and thus to prosperity. On the other hand, multinational brands are more vulnerable and in danger of losing their connection with the original brand identity. Aspects such as corporate social responsibility can have a certain impact on brands. It can be assumed that institutions with a better social and environmental record and an interest in sustainability will be rewarded by their clients and gain a higher acceptance of their brands. The survival of traditional or established brands in emerging markets has been jeopardized by so-called challenger brands and copycat brands. These brands use a western image for their products and services and simultaneously tap their knowledge of local markets and tastes. This advantage is also taken by some of the education hubs that have been described above. Sataøen (2015, p.714) found that “the similarities regarding core value statements used by different universities and university colleges are most striking. The individual higher education institutions

conform to a standard repertoire of values, such as ‘openness/transparency’, ‘diversity’, ‘quality’, ‘critical’ and ‘commitment’”.

Another brand marketing strategy would be to ensure increased awareness by international media. Most universities restrict their media presence to the proclamation of success stories based on research results, but the proclamation of a set of civic values grounded in the unique character of each student community might be as effective: “For most universities, their biggest selling point will be their students. Ours at Sussex are political, feisty and fun – whether occupying lecture theatres in dispute with the management or staging kiss-ins at Sainsbury’s to protest against homophobia, they are our best brand ambassadors” (Phipps, 2015).

### *6.12 The formation of brand alliances*

The formation of alliances with those who strive for solutions to the grand societal challenges has been beneficial to many commercial brands. An obvious example of this would be Coca Cola supporting the World Wildlife Fund. Besides co-branding the most successful strategy that has come up in recent years is celebrity branding (e.g. David Beckham for underwear, Johannes Kepler for the University of Linz). Further examples from Austria, such as Universität Mozarteum or Sigmund Freud University, use celebrity names as part of the designation of their institutions.

The larger grouping of consumers are highly active supporters of brands in the form of fan clubs or single fanatics networking in favour of a particular brand. They might wear the logo, recommend the brand to friends, or form online communities, spreading the news about brand events. Alumni clubs do this for university brands and thus fulfil their primary mission. Albert Muniz and Thomas O’Guinn (2001) explored this idea in their highly influential paper entitled ‘Brand community’.

Gunn (2013) chose global university alliances as the objects of his investigation. He found out that several alliances have turned into a brand alliance, either in a bilateral form (e.g. as mergers), or as multilateral interest groups, such as the Russell Group. In times of competitive challenges at the higher education markets, such alliances can secure the survival of universities. Their collective actions and marketing endeavours render not only a remarkable collaborative advantage, but also a roof brand, such as the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), Universitas 21 (U21), and the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN).

### *6.13 Structuring the brand architecture*

Brand architecture orchestrates the interaction among the various levels of a brand hierarchy. There are serveral models for the positioning of the corporate brand. In masterbrand models the corporate brand is the sole source of credibility, spanning a set of offerings of services. In overbrand models and other endorsement models, individual service brands operate under a strong family brand.

Geyrhalter (2013) recommends CEOs to make the basic decision whether a “Branded House” strategy or a “House of Brands” strategy is the best option for an organisation.

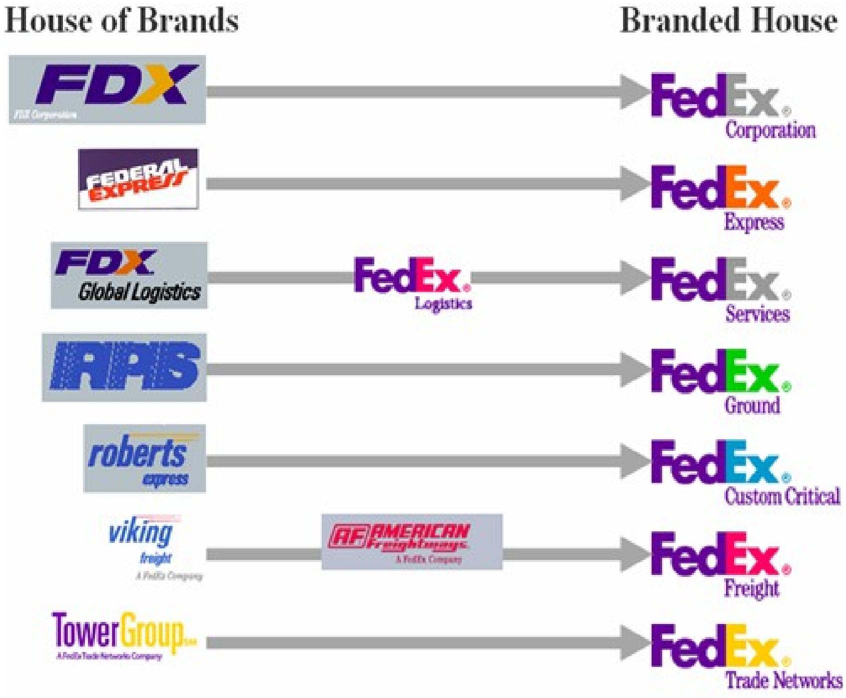


*Figure 10: Comparison of brand strategies (Geyrhalter, 2013)*

Moorthy (2012) distinguishes between horizontal and vertical service differentiation. Both types are part of the innovation cycle of an organisation. Horizontal differentiation is mainly achieved by means of a brand proliferation strategy, involving the brand name. In this way branding activities can lead to a concentration of markets encompassing of a small number of leading names. This market concentration, also referred to as monopolization, can have an adverse effect on both innovation and the competitive behaviour of organisations (Dixit and Stiglitz, 1977). The abundance of research has been done on the topic shows the impact of branding activities on the vertical differentiation of products and services.

The brand architecture is also impacted by horizontal and vertical mergers of institutions. Pruvot et al. (2015, p.8) give a recent example from the universities' sector:

> “One example of this type of merger can be found at the University of Tallinn, Estonia which, since 2005, has merged with eight smaller institutes and colleges. These included public and private institutions, but which all specialise in one field (e.g. pedagogical studies, film and media). In such cases, the brand of the larger institution remains intact, with the smaller institution being “absorbed”. Vertical mergers are therefore also sometimes referred to as 'absorptions' in this report.”

The fact that innovation  and service competition are interdependent has been investigated among others by Arrow (1962). Branding activities can, however, be a substitute for service innovation. In these cases organisations prefer to introduce new services that are based mainly on reputation and image, lacking any improvements of quality or advancements in their development.

New brand architecture systems may give an impetus to a cultural shift or identity change. They should be based on a survey of the perceptions concerning the main reputation drivers of the organisation. Among them would be the ability to attract, develop and retain talents and to foster innovations of all sorts. In order to accomplish this, universities will have to adapt their teaching and learning strategies as well as management styles in order to accommodate higher degrees of entrepreneurial behaviour. In recent years, university leaders have started with making allowances for a so-called “third mission” culture within universities, which typically differs markedly from that found in the commercial world. Its dimensions are continuing education, knowledge transfer and social engagement. Quite a few branding models have been developed for the first and second missions, for the third mission this is still to be completed. Stakeholder satisfaction and other “principles of corporate social responsibility speak to the obligations that business has to society on the institutional, organizational and individual levels” (Orlitzky and Swanson, 2012, p.120).

The third mission is to be based on a close relationship between higher education institutions, businesses and governments, the so called triple helix (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 1997), in order to enhance innovation, economic development and social cohesion. The triple helix study pleads for a more prominent role of the universities in the generation of new organisational and social forms for the production, transfer and utilization of knowledge. Social engagement is usually related to ties of mutual benefit at a regional level, between a university and the communities surrounding it. The European Commission has launched a specific programme for this purpose under the heading “smart specialisation”.

Gyrd-Jones, Merrilees and Miller (2013) investigated the alignment of complex corporate tasks such as communication, identity and vision building by involving multiple stakeholders in a way that corporate values and organisational culture can benefit. Balmer (2013, p.730) explains how these facets can be combined in a corporate brand orientation: “As such, given the wide interest in corporate brands, some may find it inexplicable why the brand orientation canon has not accorded greater and sharper prominence to corporate brands”.

With regard to recovering from reputational brand damage the old saying applies that it is not sufficient to be virtuous, one has to appear virtuous to society as well and talk about it. Brand communication is key in this respect. Shanahan and Seele (2015) explore how public opinion and

reputation management theories are key to reputation recovery. For instance Aristotle's theories on virtue and ethos have been taken as the basis for recommendations on the improvement of corporate reputation management. Their central message can be summarized as follows: "The intellectual virtue of practical reason is inseparably linked with the moral virtues of the affective part of the soul. It is impossible, Aristotle tells us, to be really good without wisdom, or to be really wise without moral virtue" (Kenny, 2012, p.215). If universities see themselves as the gatekeepers of wisdom, their brand will not be successful without ethical components.

### *6.14 Employer branding*

The higher education market and the talent market are closely interlinked areas. Attracting and retaining outstanding talent has become a major organizational challenge, not only for enterprises, but also for universities. The development of employer branding activities follows a number of principles which deviate from regular service or product branding. "Mastering the art of the who" (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014) marks the difference between leading brands and others. Recruiting graduates on the basis of a qualification for leadership is essential for a sustainable development of any institution, although there are various notions of talent discussed in academia (Van Arensbergen et al., 2014).

The purpose of this chapter is to present case studies of employer branding and identify which employer brands have successfully managed to attract talented people or even to tempt graduates to return to the university as a workplace. A study by Bonaiuto, et al. (2013) indicates that the decisive brand attributes depend on the employer's innovation skills, his commitment to social projects and his openness. The ideal employer is described as a kind of organisation which values skills and attributes and, last but not least, as a place with viable career perspectives. LinkedIn's Talent Brand Index for instance can measure how attractive an employer is to potential talent by examining billions of member interactions on the social network LinkedIn which has recruited by now more than 238 million members. LinkedIn Talent Solutions aims at connecting the right talent with the right job opportunity for improved individual and organisational success (http://talent.linkedin.com/).

A starting point for any adoption of a suitable strategy or of a new model by a university is the investigation into the current perception of the organization as an employer. Furthermore, the preparation of an employer value proposition is inevitable in order to have a basis for all external and internal communication processes with talent. It has to become obvious whether a particular university brand is largely determined by the employee management of the institution. Securing a recruitment advantage has become more difficult for universities over the years because the academic talent market is more competitive than ever. Recruiting high potentials early, and

maintaining their employment has become a real challenge to enterprises and higher education institutions alike. Lifelong employment is no longer the norm and is often given up in favour of a multiple career path and job mobility. The way in which reputation plays a pivotal role in the recruiting process is used by Brønn and Simcic-Brønn (2015) as a hypothetical paradigm for employer branding as well as reputation management.

An employer value proposition must include the major distinctive traits that are likely to create the greatest possible impact on the target groups as well as prove the superiority of the employer with regards to the competition. Again, the distinctiveness of a university will provide guidance to the applicants for pertinent vacancies and will facilitate the matching process between university and experts. This process, as well as the selection procedure itself, has been outsourced by many universities without being aware of the implications for the brand:

> "Remember that selection can also act as an attraction tool. Market-leading and innovative assessment centres and selection tools can leave even rejected candidates talking about your brand, back on campus or in the social media space" (Araujo and Boyde, 2014, p.3).

And again the ranking of institutions plays a crucial role in various employers' league tables such as that of Universum. Its global student surveys are carried out in 23 countries in order to determine which employers are the most attractive, and which ones have lost their popularity with future talent. It is interesting to note that there is not a single university listed as an attractive employer in their survey of 2013. Although the pay is also surely more lucrative at most business companies than in academia, there are a number of other reasons for this situation, including the weak employer brand of universities. They have to become what Universum (2014) calls "a factualist employer". The idea is to create a candidate experience and arrange for a recruitment process that will make people who look for an academic position feel that they are welcome and appreciated. There frequently seems to be a lack of welcome culture in higher education institutions. The issue is particularly burning for Austrian institutions since many academically educated people leave Austria in order to pursue a career abroad and cause a so-called brain drain also to universities. According to experts, this is largely due to their diminishing employer attractiveness, the major constituent of any employer brand. A growing number of the academic staff are missing sufficient opportunities for development and competitive salaries. Supportive measures such as the dual-career-service of Universities Austria are meant to attract the attention of highly qualified graduates from abroad. This approach helps to compensate for an ageing population and waves of retirements which lead to a shortage of human resources in certain subject fields. Thus universities have to reach out to talent in novel ways because the younger generation of scholars and scientists increasingly trust more familiar sources such as their extended social networks, be it LinkedIn or ResearchGate.

In addition, universities are advised to use world-class professors or - if available - Nobel prize winners as brand icons and as instruments for talent attraction and faculty recruitment. The motivation to do so is manifold, e.g.:

> "The stimulus for employer branding is emerging increasingly from senior management teams within universities and colleges that are anxious to develop a long-term and strategic approach to the recruitment of staff in line with their mission and vision" (Stamp, 2006, p.1).

In many other countries besides Austria, talent attraction and retention have become a priority on the agenda of university leaders, as talent is vital for the sustainability of the university brand. The principal of King's College London, Ed Byrne gives the following justification for doing so: "When it comes to attracting the most talented students and staff from around the world, a university with a well-respected brand has an enormous advantage. Universities need to market themselves as never before" (Byrne, 2015).

Furthermore, it is deemed necessary to redefine the job description of the academic as more than just a researcher and academic teacher. It will have to stand for people who want to engage deeply with communities and develop new ways of implementing the socio-economic mission of universities. The Donau Universität Krems (Austria) is offering seminars on "Personal Branding in Education" with a duration of fourteen weeks. Its aim is to help faculty members develop practical skills in designing and developing electronic teaching portfolios, based on representative concepts and targeted designs. In addition, participants of these seminars gain useful knowledge that will help them to sustain their skills and improve their own self-marketing (http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/imperia/md/images/department/imb/forschung/lehre/seminar_personalbrandingineducation_en.pdf ).

The job satisfaction among non-academic employees at universities has been investigated by Smerek and Peterson (2007). This is a particularly valuable piece of research, since the impact of this group of staff upon the university brand has been largely neglected in literature due to the strong concentration upon the faculty:

> "Understanding job satisfaction requires knowing some of the major debates in the field of industrial psychology. The concept of job satisfaction emerged in this area and Herzberg's duality theory is one of its major postulates. In higher education, job satisfaction, particularly among administrators, has been sparsely examined, and cumulatively the studies in this area suggest there is little unity in understanding job satisfaction in a college or university context" (Smerek and Peterson, 2007, p.230).

While a single market for education and for labour is an important element of the membership of the European Union, it is at the same time a greater challenge for employer branding. Another challenge is related to the timespan of employment:

> "Long gone are the days when lifelong employment was the norm. Employees of today change jobs more frequently as well as industries. They are also more prone to fundamentally change their career paths in completely new directions. Several studies find that young people today believe they will work for 15-20 employers throughout their careers, compared with just 5-7 employers 15 years ago" (Universum, 2013, p.4)

The reasons why employers are considered to be attractive are manifold: first of all there has to be a strong association to attributes such as market success, professional training and development, as well as to the availability of career challenges. Ceremonies and celebrations, for instance, assist in binding people to the group that they belong to. Rituals around starting and finishing the academic year, such as fresher week and graduation ceremonies, are obvious opportunities for incorporating symbols or traditions that strengthen an institution's brand and the loyalty of employees. In other words, encouraging organisational identification is an important aspect of the professional development efforts of many institutions (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). Instead of selling the university on its past successes, its leaders might be better off by providing confidence developed around the university's future plans, to the point that all employees can trust the university in being able to sustain their career. This is particularly the case in professional higher education (PHE) as can be learned from a recent EURASHE study: "We observe a tendency to rebrand PHE institutions as universities of applied sciences/ technical universities and more collaborations of PHE programmes with academic institutions for doctoral research" (Grdošić and Tannhäuser, 2014, p.94).

Fernandez-Araoz (2014) defines what great employer's decisions are based upon and presents a number of compelling arguments about their connectivity with branding. He provides invaluable recommendations on how to recruit world-class faculty, foster their strengths, utilize the collective greatness of academic clusters and create not only better institutions but also increase their reputation. According to Aaker (1997) the personality of a brand is also defined by the people associated with the brand, which not only includes the users of a brand, but also its endorsers, such as the CEO or the employees of the organisation. The same notion is confirmed by Ambroise, et al. (2014), who claim that the type of personality of a brand ambassador has a strong impact on client behaviour. Variants such as the brand's reputation and the profiles of the celebrities supporting it have to taken into account. Accordingly, the authors suggest a new method for selecting brand ambassadors taking their personalities as a basis and putting them into the context of co-branding activities. There are also brand ambassadors within an institution who can promote the brand as

soon as they receive public recognition in the form of awards or other distinctions. The Guardian University Awards for instance recognise and showcase "inspirational leadership" in the higher education sector of the United Kingdom. The award is open to leaders at all levels and is to give recognition to individuals who have been successful team leaders, fostering innovation and collaboration, delivering fruitful change for their institution or the higher education community at large.

### *6.15 Location branding*

The notion that a country or nation can be actively marketed has been described by Anholt (2008) in his pioneering article on this subject. He claims that it is essential to ensure that the vision of the place is supported and reinforced by every act of communication. The study by Hanna and Rowley (2008, p.64) provides strong evidence of the fact "that place branding has transcended into a composite construct that not only encompasses tourism but also economic, socio-political and historical prospects". In order to communicate their distinctiveness, several countries have started in the late 1990s to create a "distinctive country of origin sign" (WIPO, 2013, p.28, fig. 1.1). Launched in 2005 and edited since then by Simon Anholt, the journal "Place Branding and Public Diplomacy" is a quarry of ideas on this subject. Published by Palgrave Journals it offers results from the latest worldwide research on the images, identities and reputations of places. Recently Anholt initiated the "Good country index" (www.goodcountry.org) in which the great asset of Europe as a whole is characterized by "love and order", a combination which seems to be the secret of success of many European universities as well, particularly of those eager to create a "lovemark" (see above). But there are numerous other ways in which a country can nurture its image and apply it when conquering new markets. In most cases, the country images and the global reputation of the place guide our choice of products and services that are specific for a particular location. This can either lead to an export success for articles "made in X" or to the top position of the country among other tourist destinations. Bilkey and Nes (1982), as well as Han and Terpstra (1988) provide evidence that customers take note of where a product comes from and associate certain notions with it. Thus a powerful and appealing geographical origin is a definite advantage in the global market place. Countries compete with each other not only in attracting international organisations and headquarters, but also with regard to the best brains and talents. Thus a major brain gain serves as an indicator of a strong location brand. This is also the case with higher education institutions.

A positive national image provides competitive advantages which can be utilized by various stakeholders including universities. "One example is efforts to rebrand and situate universities and their locations in a 'glocal' context. This is particularly clear in recent increases in the amounts of money universities are spending on university and place promotions" (Kamara, 2013, p.1). Practical

evidence for this has been yielded by the recent rebranding exercise of King's College London where "research also found the word 'London' was an important part of the name" (Byrne, 2015). According to Grove (2015a) "Universities in London" is the most popular term among all generic searches made by US students relating to international study. Thus

> "institutions a little closer to the capital are also including London in their name. Thames Valley University became the University of West London in 2011, Brunel University added London to its title last year after gaining permission from the Privy Council, and others that use the capital in their title include Kingston University and Middlesex University" (Line, 2015).

A number of universities have chosen their 'region' as a major focus, in particular if they joined the EU programmes on 'smart specialisation'. The economic validation of local enterprise partnerships has been on the agenda of many universities working closely with regional authorities in order to become a central source of the socio-economic prosperity of their regions. Thus the population of these communities believes that the university will have a significant impact on their location branding. The impact, however is reciprocal: the pros and cons of a location can also determine the attractiveness of a higher education institution, as can be illustrated by the following example:

> "High tuition fees and cost of living have lost London the top place in the QS Best Student Cities Index for the second year in a row, while North American cities fare less well than those in Europe, the Far East and Australia." (Jobbins, 2013, p.1)

London is indeed a very special case, as the results from the Best University Workplace Survey 2015 show. The net promoter score in the following chart reveals great deviances among the various regions of the United Kingdom.

| **I would recommend working at my university to others** | **Agree %** |
|---|---|
| North East | 74.2 |
| East Midlands | 70.3 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 70.0 |
| West Midlands | 69.7 |
| South East (not London) | 68.3 |
| North West | 62.5 |
| Scotland | 56.4 |
| Wales | 51.2 |
| South West | 50.3 |
| East of England | 50.0 |
| London | 42.0 |

*Figure 11: Times Higher Education's Best University Workplace Survey 2015*

There are a number of interpretations possible for the low record of London, the one below, however, is the most convincing one:

> “Ed Byrne, president and principal of King’s College London, said that the results may reflect the fact that although London is “one of the major international cities for university life”, it is “unusual in that universities are a fairly small part of the ecosystem in what is arguably the world’s greatest city today”. This has “huge advantages” for academia generally, but there are potential disadvantages for individuals as London’s campuses are “largely city universities in and part of London, which makes a sense of community more difficult at times”, Professor Byrne said. The “social and financial pressures of living in a world city may be greater than elsewhere”, he added” (Grove, 2015b).

The University of Vienna, for instance, tries to make up for its low position in academic rankings by pointing at the benefits that the City of Vienna offers with regard to its top 'quality of living' in Europe. Furthermore, it is known for its rather low living costs as well as fairly low tuition fees. In other words the university inherits the benign characteristics of the place brand and benefits from the communication of a combined brand, in particular if the location name is part of the institution's name (e.g. University of Bologna).

Austria, for instance, seeks the advice of Simon Anholt in its attempt to create a nation brand intended to improve the recognition value and perception of the country of a political bridge builder. For this purpose he was invited as a keynote speaker to the European Forum Alpbach in 2014 (cf. http://www.alpbach.org/de/person/simon-anholt/ ). His main message was that countries (in the same way as higher education institutions) create and maintain their good reputation through co-operation and their contribution to the further development of humanity. Batra et al. (2000) show that in developing countries, brands coming from developed economies are generally given preference to domestic brands, an attitude that is hardly informed by the actual quality of products and services, but primarily by their social status.

According to Schmidt and Baumgarth (2014, p.42), the Austrian skiing resort of Kitzbühel is the perfect specimen of a brand oriented location, because it defined its brand and looked for appropriate services and events that would fit the chosen brand identity:

> “This was later expressed by the slogan 'Kitzbühel - The legend'. In a following step, the city marketers adjusted their strategy according to the identity of the brand and to the new positioning. This led, e.g., to the development of new or the revival of existing events like a golf and mountain bike festival, a junior soccer tournament, or the snow polo world cup”.

The paper by Wiedmann, Hennigs, Schmidt and Wuestefeld (2013) examines the aspect of brand heritage which can foster corporate reputation and brand value. Corporate heritage identities such as the British monarchy can have the same effect (Balmer, 2011). Thus over the last couple of years, there has been increased awareness of academics as well as practitioners with regard to corporate heritage as applied to corporate brands and identities. The attraction of British universities to the Chinese can be explained by the fact that the corporate heritage of the nation brand triggers the desire to obtain a degree branded by it:

> “What we perceive to be the best of British products for cars and clothes are the shiny labels –those that scream: "I am the best". Yet, carrying a Cambridge University certificate into a Fortune 500 company interview in Beijing screams that out loud, too, for Chinese nationals” (Gasson, 2012, p.1).

Melissa Aronczyk's research (2008) is concerned with highlighting the conditions that have led to the need of making national identities useful and she investigates the implications, the principles and the practice of nation branding. She emphasizes its importance for people's self-understanding as national citizens and global subjects, for their commitment to the terms of political self-determination, and describes its role in public communication. New Zealand has created a nation brand consisting of the following three components which are perfectly applicable to a higher education setting as well: “Open Spaces, Open Hearts and Open Minds – each providing a context for businesses and industry groups to craft stories that communicate their dynamism and value” (Smith, 2015, p.31).

Che-Ha et al. (2015) used a survey approach by collecting data from 445 students, in order to test the country-branding dimensions in Malaysia (exports, political, human, cultural, and social) against citizen emotions and perceived competitive advantage. The results of it confirm the following facts:

> “The identification of emotions and perceptions allows an organization to detect the public opinions about important elements within the country’s state of affairs. This enables marketers to develop systems and adjust campaigns based on both the characteristics of the population and their corresponding views toward that of the country’s branding elements” (Che-Ha, et. al., 2015, p.11).

Location branding can also be considered as the result of the reputation management of any administrative body responsible for a geographical entity. Similar to university ranking schemes, the Reputation Institute considered most of the measurable dimensions of a brand in their project called “Country RepTrak™ study” which was carried out in January and February of 2012 (Prado and Trad,

2013). In this study we encounter once more the notion of a brand experience which is described as follows:

> "The heart of this systematic approach is linking the emotions about a place (the degree to which people trust, admire, respect, and have a good feeling about a country or city) to the three major factors that drive reputation and stakeholder support: an advanced economy, an appealing environment, and an effective government" (Prado and Trad, 2013, p.2).

This model can be easily translated into the higher education setting where sufficient funding, an attractive learning environment and efficient governance are the key drivers as well. The challenge is to combine an attractive nation brand with the attractiveness of higher education institutions and utilize the mutual influence to create a unique synergy. A survey carried out in 2003 also confirmed that the perception of universities "is largely influenced by geography, i.e. people who have grown up in a particular region tend to identify and classify universities from that region into the various buckets. For instance, a person from the West Coast would identify the Claremont Colleges as individualistic schools, whereas someone from the East Coast would associate with Hampshire if they were to think of an individualistic college" (Harvest, 2003, p.8).

The QS Best Student Cities Index (http://www.topuniversities.com/city-rankings/2015) ranks the fifty world's best cities for students. It draws on a wide range of data, suited for assessing cities in five key indicators: universities, affordability, lifestyle, employment prospects and student community. In order to be considered for inclusion, a city must first meet two prerequisites: at least 250,000 inhabitants and more than two QS ranked higher education institutions. According to the survey of 2015, Paris is the leading city for students with regard to its student mix, desirability, employer activities and affordability. Van Rooijen (2015) makes the point that "no location" is a brand of its own right, i.e. isolated campus universities have their distinct brand image as well: "Studying in green isolation is especially attractive for younger students who will benefit from same age group, peer learning and who might be more drawn to a well-equipped lab than to the latest West End musical".

The applicability of a brand concept map (BCM) for capturing changes in image perception has been expanded by transforming it into a quantitative tool as suggested by the following paragraph:

> "Most existing methodologies (such as BCM) measure brand image using qualitative brand associations, networks of associations or other metrics designed to measure the value of these associations. However, they do not reveal explicit measures regarding the favorability of brand associations and link metrics between them" (Zenker, 2014, p.164).

A case study concerning the City of Hamburg applied the advanced BCM method as developed by Zenker (2014) elucidating the respective practical implications.

Nation brands are also submitted to ranking endeavours. WorldPR (http://www.worldpr.org/), an international public relations company with plenty of experience in government and corporate communications, for instance, investigates the salience and type of brand recognition of 214 countries and autonomous financial centres worldwide that compete in areas such as commerce and finance, industry and tourism, as well as regional and international influence. According to the 'WorldPR Global Leadership Ranking of 2015' the organisation, known as the Islamic State, is ranked 163rd out of 212 entries. The Vatican is placed behind at 192. Isis also ranks above Sudan, Kosovo and the British Virgin Islands. France tops the survey, with the UK in 11th place (http://bit.ly/1Dn02sI). What is labelled in the methodological description as 'salience' is in fact the count of Google hits.

# 7 Recommendations

The study adds to the body of knowledge by providing branding strategies that can be applied directly to higher education institutions. A strategy can be defined as a plan or roadmap for the achievement of a particular goal on the basis of a theoretical model. From the numerous models of the brand the following multi-dimensional one has been chosen as a paradigm:

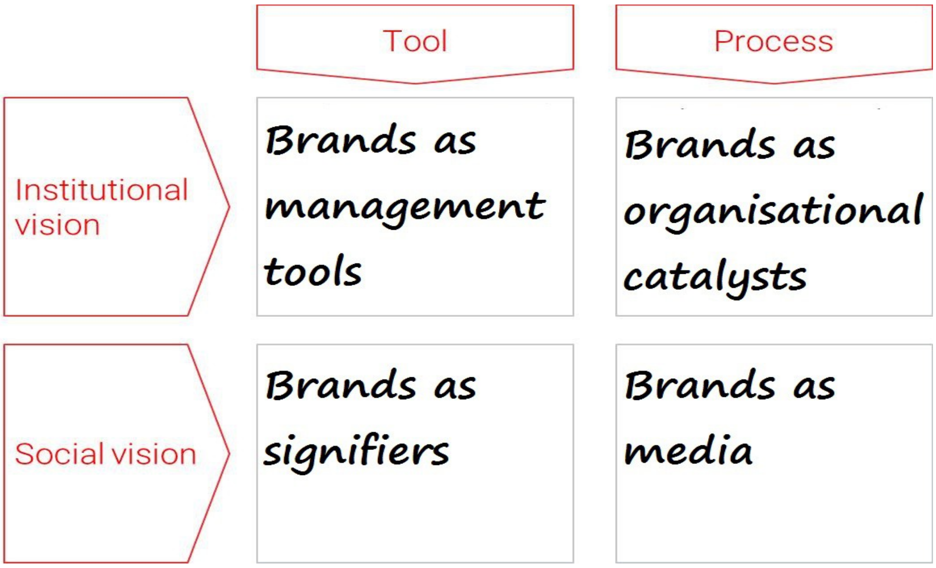


*Figure 12: Functional model adapted from Kornberger (2010)*

This model, established and tested for entrepreneurial brands, assumes that a brand is multi-functional. It serves two strategic visions: an institutional and a social one. Both strategic visions cover the tools and strategic processes of the brand management.

A theoretical model is also the basis for evaluating the performance of a strategy. Generally there are a number of techniques which help to put forward a certain strategy either as part of a plan of action or a set of procedures. A strategy ought to represent both a systems view and a functional view of the subject matter and in any case provide an implementation method.

The following key findings are of direct practical relevance to any higher education institution:

**Key finding 1: Distinctive relevance can only be achieved by following the best branding strategies**

Distinctive relevance is one of the three laws of branding that have been concluded from neuroscientific foundations:

> "They are the laws of distinctive relevance, coherence and participation. In one sentence, the motto of these laws is: creating and repeating relevant specificity (over time and across touch points) around one central brand theme, using the richest and most engaging forms and media possible" (Walvis, 2008, p.189).

An organisation can prevail over its competitors only if it can establish a sustainable form of distinctiveness. Thus strategic positioning can mean either to select activities that vary from those of the competitors or perform the very same activities in a variant way. It is obvious, however, that the more benchmarking universities do, the more they become alike. According to Calkins (2012), niche strategies are more advisable than those attacking the core because they have a better chance of not being bothered by established brands in defence. The real challenge for a niche strategy is to cope with the small size of the niche which must suffice to support the enterprise. Furthermore, the niche strategy as well as its brand management must encompass all the various identities of a higher education institution:

> "For the university, it brings the discipline of brand management to the forefront. Many universities recognize that they are no longer a student body, a faculty, a sports team, or an academic program. They are all those things and much more. They are looking for unique value propositions just like the corporations that they cultivate for financial support. Even more important, they need to develop distinct brand experiences that make them stand out in a competitive marketplace and create the support of loyal alumni as lifetime brand ambassadors" (Harvest, 2003, p.1).

The key steps that universities have to take in order to accomplish such a development are summarized in a "University Brand Check List" of the same publication (Harvest, 2003, p.9). A practical roadmap to uniqueness has been given by two Australian marketing professors at the turn of the century:

> "Through the adoption of unique courses or programs, or by servicing niche markets, institutions can establish defensible positions within saturated and competitive markets. Such strategies of differentiation do not rely upon offering competitive prices and can allow premiums to be charged if the product is perceived by the student/consumer as valuable." (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2001, p. 135)

**Key finding 2: Universities positioned around innovation belong to leading HE brands**

In their position statements, many universities claim to be innovative; but when it comes to HE marketing, it is not enough to claim that the institution is innovative; it is essential to provide

convincing narratives and give striking examples for stakeholders to believe in. Special events have to be organized to show off innovative technology and practices to the public, such as the quantum optics experiments carried out by the University of Vienna. They are not only a powerful tool for talent recruitment, but build the reputation the university needs to succeed in rankings. There is, however, a word of warning to be taken into account: “If you're an innovator, it is essential to consider how the established players will respond to your launch” (Calkins, 2012, p.236). This consideration ought to include also the brand's long-term perspective in its glocal environment: “The institutions that will be the winners 25 years from now are those that ensure their brand recognition in a globally competitive marketplace through smart, long-term, sustainable multichannel marketing strategies” (Fireng, 2014, p.15).

**Key finding 3: An effective student and faculty retention is key to the longevity of the brand**

Some university brands have survived for 600 and more years despite periods inflicted by financial stringencies. There is always a fundamental tension in branding when it comes to provide better and better service. In the same way as customers want more and more value for their money in order to remain loyal to their brand, university students expect individual and more sophisticated tuition with top faculty. The balance that universities in the same way as other organisations need to consider is the following: how much quality and investment is necessary to sustain the brand. Thus client and talent retention efforts are a crucial part of a successful branding strategy. Again, the emotional aspect with regard to the education and work experience is of great relevance, and every effort must be made to transform them into a brand experience. The Gallup-Purdue Index (Gallup, 2014) investigated which higher education experiences and perceptions result in a more successful performance at the workplace and in a satisfactory work-life balance. One of its aims was the collection of evidence for the following correlation:

> “When graduates are emotionally attached to their college or university, they are two times more likely to be thriving in all elements of well-being, and they are two times more likely to be engaged with their jobs. These interconnections make it important to look at the strength of the existing emotional bonds between graduates and their alma maters and what may contribute to them” (Gallup, 2014, p.17).

Bruni (2015) noted in his NYT review that the impact of mentors, projects and other positive influences such as diversity was evident in this study regardless of a graduate’s personality.

On the basis of these three key findings the following recommendations can be given to practitioners in a higher education environment:

Recommendation 1: Create a brand that appeals rationally as well as emotionally

In order to ensure a rational impact, employees must be educated on their HEI brand. The more connected they are to the brand, the better ambassadors they are likely to be. Academics can be taken on board by giving professional support to leverage cross-functional expertise and by including them in a brand task force. For the emotional impact the following advice can be found in the literature:

> "If marketers wish to enhance psychological ownership, they should focus on facilitating authentic pride that results from feelings of accomplishment due to effort. If they are concerned about enhancing outcomes from a product or brand that is already psychologically owned, they should focus on reminding consumers about feelings of accomplishments due to innate skills" (Kirk et al., 2014, p.34).

The higher level of emotional impact than that achieved by pride is certainly reached when brand love prevails.

Recommendation 2: Investigate the brand orientation of your institution

Engage in professional brand mapping which helps to comprehend better what makes a brand distinct and identifies where it is positioned perceptually in relation to other brands. To do so, surveys are the most convenient way to ask participants to indicate their brand orientation. A well-established roadmap has been defined as follows:

> "As a first step, responsible managers should define and adopt brand-oriented values. Then they should formulate brand-oriented norms, via branding manuals and positioning statements. As the next step, they should manipulate such brand-oriented artefacts as elements of building design. Lastly, they should adopt brand-oriented behaviours, such as implementing control mechanisms and engaging in corporate identity campaigns" (Baumgarth, 2009, p.43).

Recommendation 3: Recognise the untapped research profile and value of research outputs of the university

Research branding needs to be based on excellent researchers be they scholars or scientists who are determined to follow their curiosity and or pursue the current interests of their disciplines. As a result they can enhance the understanding of our world and add different perspectives to the way that the great challenges of our society can be met. Sustainable research can only prosper when it is grounded in integrity and follows ethical principles. Thus university leaders are advised to provide

the necessary framework for a workable research system and to secure the appropriate external recognition for outstanding achievements. University brands profit a lot from the number and level of awards associated with the institution. A number of Nobel Prize winners on the faculty can be an enormous asset. This helps a higher education institution attract superior talent, to reach the top of league tables and secure their way to distinction. Furthermore, it helps to increase the visibility of investments in professional development.

<u>Recommendation 4: Respect endeavours that support the third mission of universities</u>

Academics usually have their personal beliefs in how to meet the challenges of the community at large. Thus it is necessary to establish a permanent dialogue focusing on how an institution's policies regarding sustainability, diversity and knowledge transfer make a tangible contribution to our society. The target of not only doing well, but also doing good, will enhance any internal engagement considerably. Social participation can be encouraged by sharing authentic episodes and other narratives across a variety of media so that both employees and students become aware of their third mission.

<u>Recommendation 5: The brand should be an expression of both the internal and external identity of the university.</u>

The most common mistake organizations make is basing a brand on their external identity only. The right balance is decisive for the success of the brand as expressed by the following statement:

> “Internal as well as external stakeholders are critical; faculty and staff, for instance, constitute one of the 7Ps (people) that contribute to the brand experience. Recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff are critical to the brand promise” (Dholakiaa and Acciardob, 2014, p.149).

The brand must be built to have a multi-dimensional appeal equally to all key audiences - students, prospects, employees and opinion leaders. Its major benefit is the behaviour it inspires in each of these groups. Amongst students and staff the brand will create a strong bond which makes them loyal and willing to act as advocates or brand ambassadors. Amongst prospects it will be seen as an asset to their reputation. And amongst opinion leaders it will generate positive attitudes towards the institution. It is important to understand that a brand needs to be articulated in different ways to the various target groups. Thus in the case of rebranding one should rethink the market first and then rethink the services to be changed.

**Conclusion**

Referring back to the research question as how to achieve distinction, it has become obvious through this research project that a dichotomy has to be applied. The branding orientation and the identity definition of an organisation are interdependent entities. Branding policies that want to have genuine impact have to take both aspects into account which is visualized by the following graph:

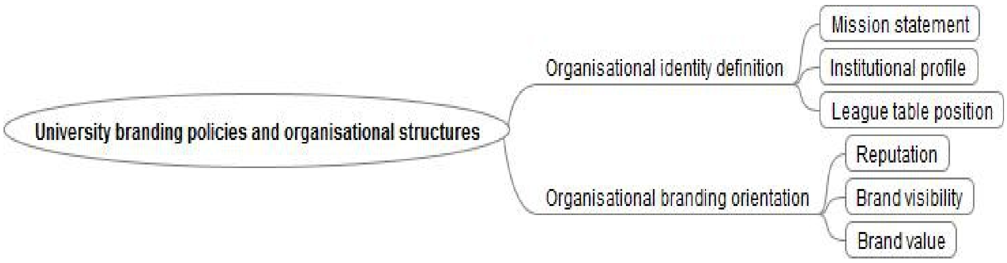


Figure 13: The coin model

In other words there are two sides to the coin which operates the higher education slot machine. When university leaders fail to have the desired success, one of the reasons might be that they play heads or tails on the one hand and use forged coinage on the other hand.

The negligence of the role of identities in branding can have detrimental effects both in theory and practice, in particular with regard to positioning a university within the higher education environment, therefore: “Introducing identity into the discussion of strategic brand management broadens the research area. This contributes to alternative perspectives on positioning and emphasizes the idea of defining an identity-based position for long-term brand management” (Urde and Koch, 2014, p.480). In this model each component is made up of three elements for the sake of simplicity and easier understanding. The identity definition describes the common values of all employees and students of a university. And brand orientation denotes the external views and reflections. As expressed by the model, a concise brand identity results when its three building blocks, in particular the mission statement and the profile show high conformity. The complementary part of the model comprises concepts developed externally as a reflection of the brand identity. It focuses on the translation of the brand identity and its conveyance to the various stakeholders. As these two facets are especially important for branding policies and organisational structures, they have become part and parcel of the basic model accordingly. Furthermore, the concept of brand positioning includes, especially for organisational brands, the vision and mission of the higher education institutions. A brand derives its value from the emotions it has provoked eventually in the minds and hearts of the stakeholders. This process is supported by components such as visibility and reputation. Nevertheless, the translation of an organisation-based identity into a brand personality is an arduous and sophisticated procedure which necessitates a full-fledged brand-orientation.

“Sex sells” is one of the most frequently quoted piece of wisdom in marketing. In the case of branding it is also true that “sex explains”. By taking up this analogy some of the key components of a successful branding strategy become obvious. In the same way as the sexual orientation determines the appropriate person as a partner, the brand orientation determines the fitting object of desire. Furthermore the intensity of the experience, in the latter case of the brand experience, works as a trigger for true love. When a university is capable of arousing undivided brand love in most of its members, this is primarily due to its distinctiveness because being the” one and only” is an unfailing sign of distinction.

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